

12 BIG REVIEWS | NEW SCREENS: MEDAL OF HONOR JEDI KNIGHT II: OUTCAST AND MORE...

GeForce3 The best buys & cheaper options

PC GAMER

The World's Best-Selling PC Games Magazine

INSIDE GAME GOD WARREN SPECTOR'S DREAM STUDIO

DEUS EX 2

World Exclusive scoop – plus a first look at Thief III

www.pcgamer.com
VOL. 8 NO. 8 • AUGUST 2001

SUPER SCOOPS!

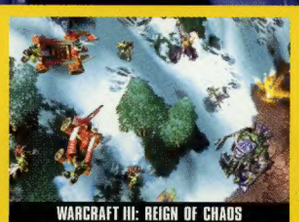
53 HOT NEW GAMES

→ I'M ON PAGE 25!





STAR TREK: BRIDGE COMMANDER



WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS



MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

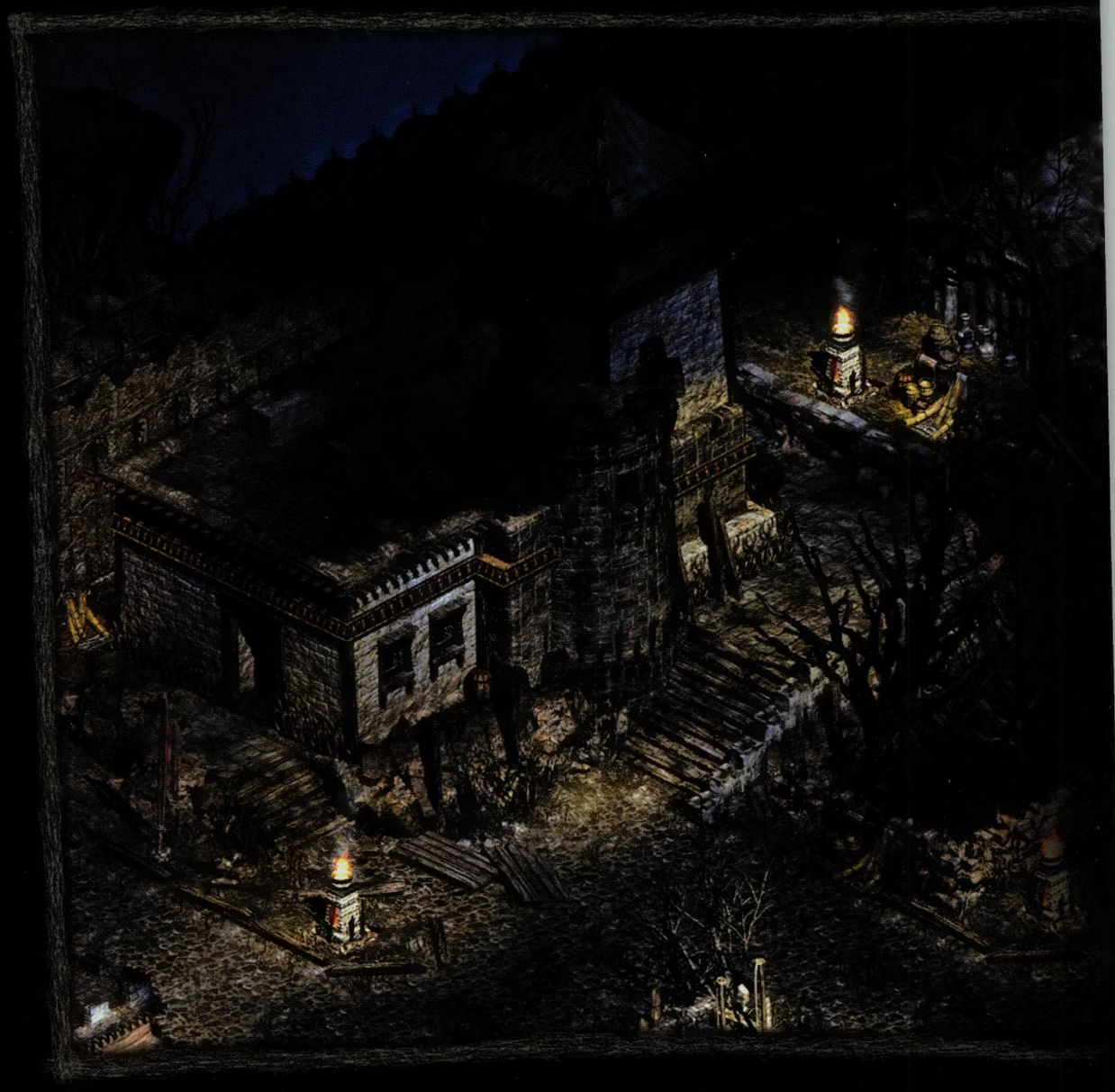
■ Star Wars Galaxies ■ Sid Meier's SimGolf ■ Age of Mythology ■ Sims Online
■ Republic ■ Unreal II PLUS BioWare's STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

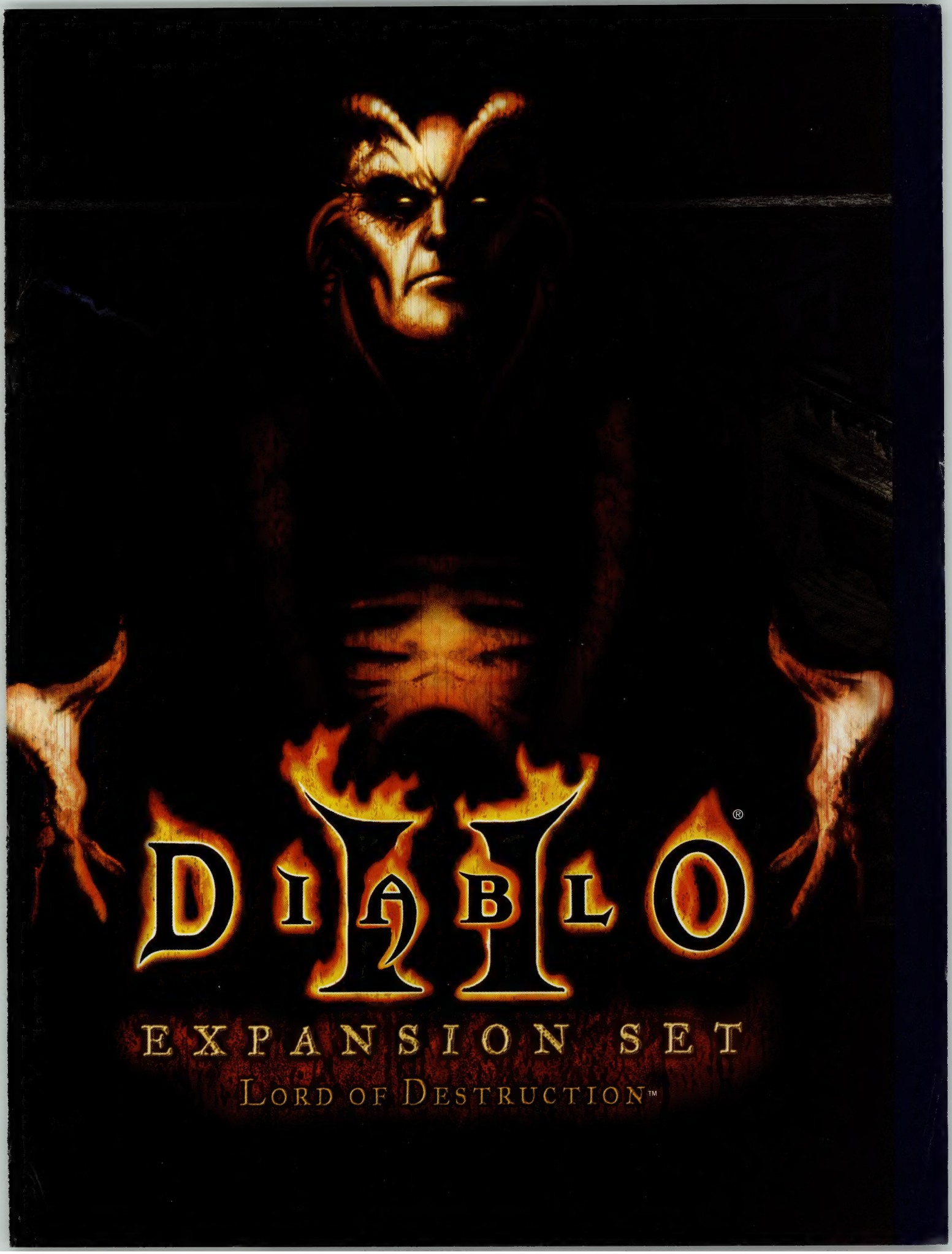
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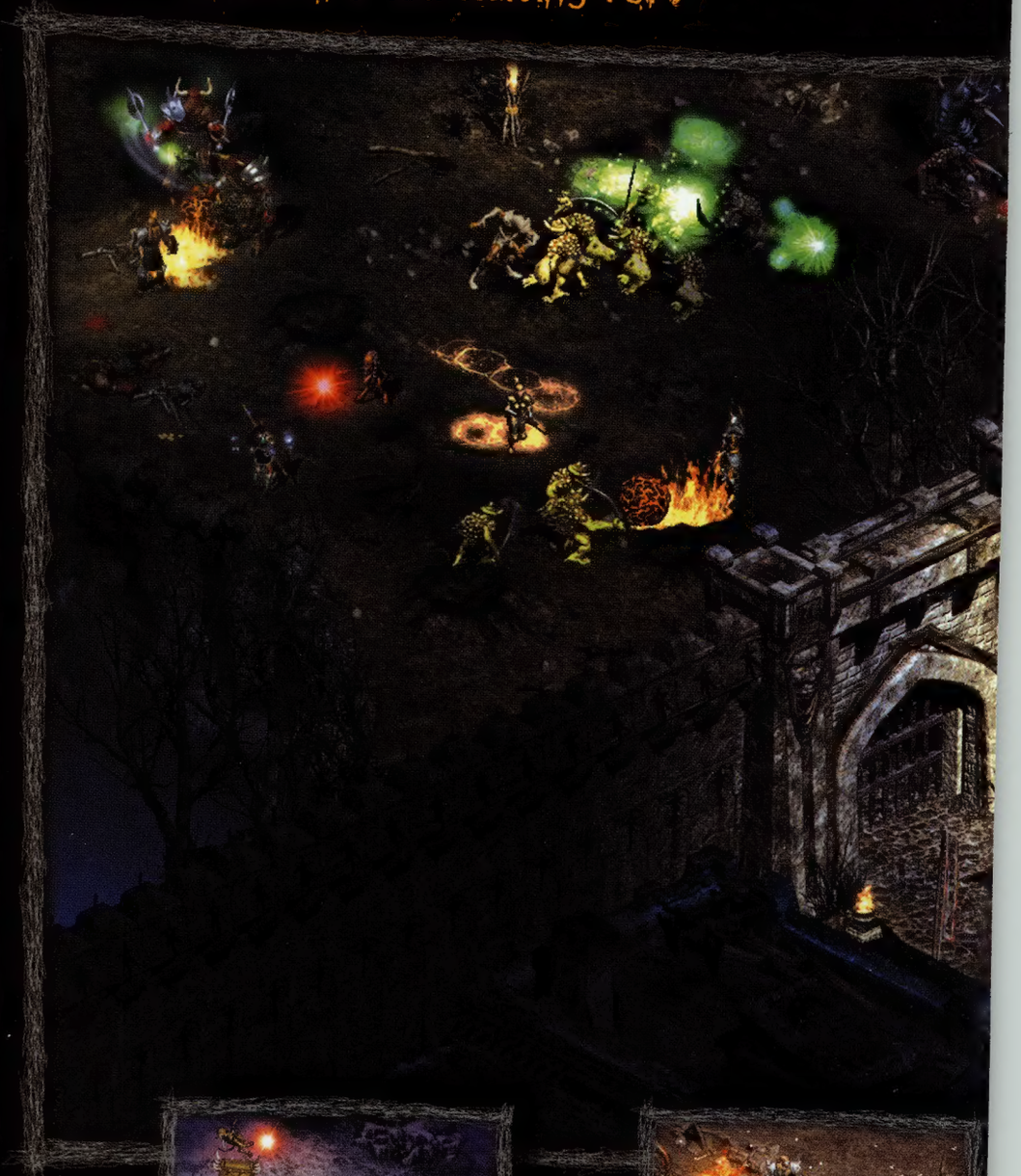
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BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

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MATURE 17+

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

MATURE (17+)
Animated Violence
Animated Blood and Gore

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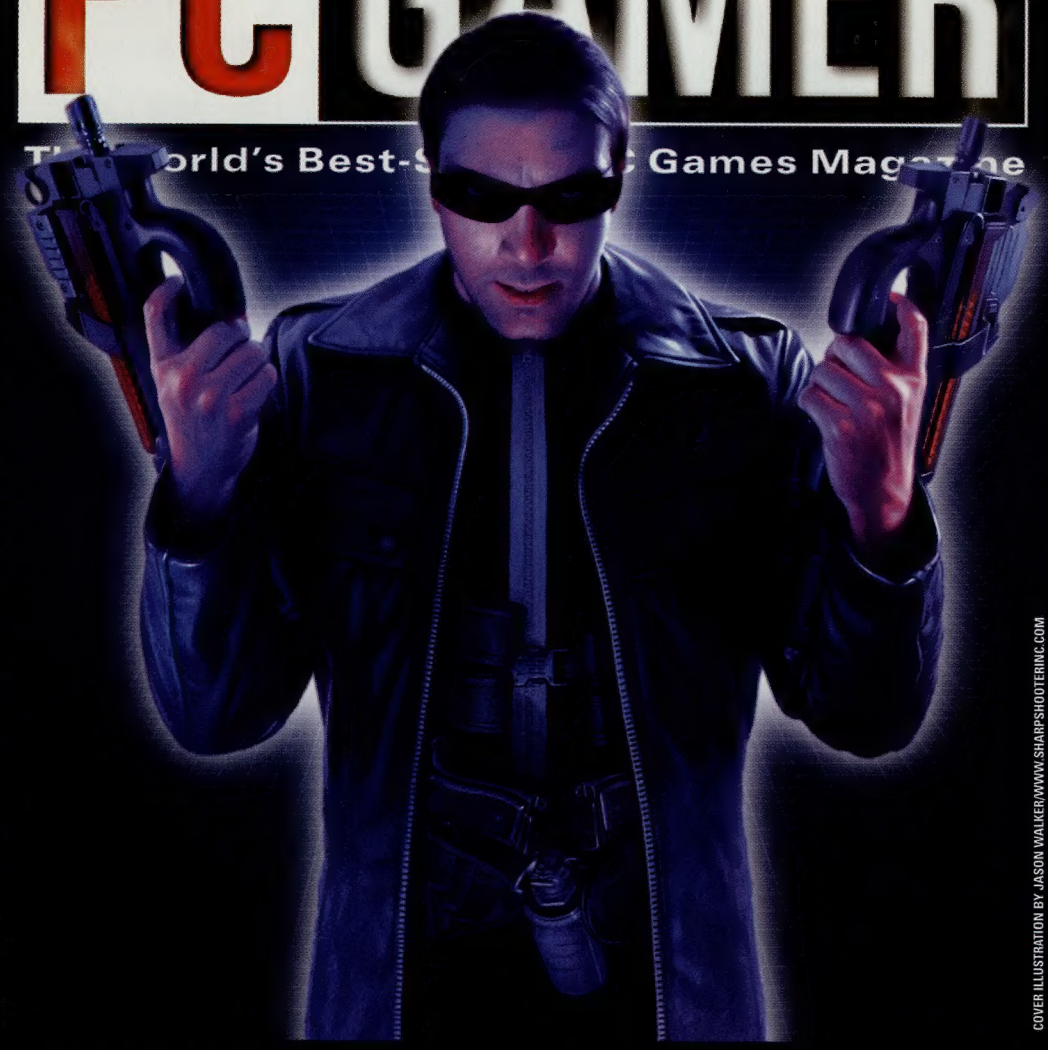
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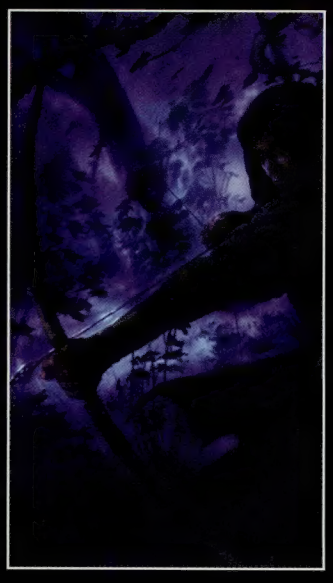
T[illegible]orld's Best-S[illegible] PC Games Mag[illegible]ne



COVER ILLUSTRATION BY JASON WALKER/WWW.SHARPSHOOTERINC.COM

COVER STORY

AFTER THE [ION] STORM



37 Ion Storm as we knew it is no more, but the members of its Austin branch have big goals as they start anew. We get down and dirty with Warren Spector on what he's planning for his hot new development firm. Don't miss this in-depth feature, which includes a first peek into *Thief III* and *Deus Ex 2*.

SCOOPS

GAME ON!

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STAR WARS GALAXIES Find out why this fantastic MMRPG has everyone calling it Game of Show.

STAR WARS JEDI KNIGHT II: OUTCAST It's a *Star Wars* action game powered by the *Quake III* engine and developed by Raven. What else do you need to know?

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT This game is the closest you can get to World War II combat without risking your life.



MAX PAYNE It's almost done and looking better than ever! And it should boast some of the most memorable scenes in PC gaming.

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN BJ Blascowitz is back thanks to the glorious *Quake III* engine. Check out our update.

REPUBLIC Elixir Studios is working on what could be one of the most ambitious PC strategy games since *Black & White*.

SID MEIER'S SIMGOLF The definitive Game God brings his latest strategy offering into the *Sims* lineup with a Tycoon-like creation of a golf course!



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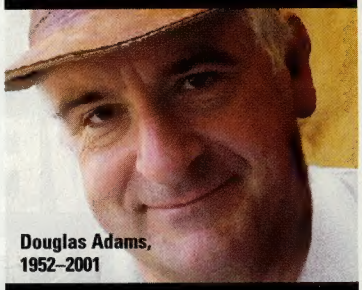
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Who says flight sims are history? Mahood looks at 10 hot options coming your way.

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What's with LucasArts' PC games? Where can you get the *They Hunger* trilogy?

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Find out everything you need to know about E3, including who trumped who and the truth about booth babes (well, kinda²).

LETTER FROM THE ED.



Douglas Adams, 1952–2001

"For what we are about to see next, we must enter quietly into the realm of genius!"

I'm not one for having a hero, or living and breathing another person's thoughts and ideals. I prefer to be more selective in my appreciation of great people's contributions to their art or science. But probably the closest I've come to having a bona fide hero was after first listening to the radio drama *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and then reading all the works of brilliant British satirist Douglas Adams. It was, therefore, a monumental shock to hear of his passing on May 11, 2001, just one week before I was going to be able to meet the great man at E3 to discuss the new *Hitchhiker's* game (and the upcoming movie, and anything else I could cram into my allotted half-hour).

Adams' wit, style, and candor were legendary among those who knew him, and among the legions of fans of his work. I can only suggest that anyone curious about creative genius and the ability to look at life from any angle (usually obtuse), and anyone who may hanker to pen hilarious yet deeply profound insights into human nature, read any and all of his works. (Particularly, find the *Original Radio Scripts of Hitchhiker's*. Penned by Adams and producer Geoffrey Perkins, it offers fantastic footnotes on the crazy creative process of putting together the radio play.) So long, and thanks for all the laughs.

Evidently last month's movie quote was tricky, since not many people spotted the line from the classic Clark Gable film *It Happened One Night*. So kudos to both Tom McGettigan and Leigh Picard, who will both be getting games this month. As always, send entries to *ednote@pcgamer.com*, and enjoy this incredible issue, packed with info on some truly stunning games.

Rob Smith

Rob Smith,
Editor-in-Chief

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THERE'S NOTHING CONVENTIONAL ABOUT IT.

Plunge back into intense World War II combat with the most realistic tactical and strategic action game ever created. Maneuver Sergeant "Tiny" McHale and his elite squad of soldiers deep behind enemy lines utilizing their combined expertise to set up ambushes, control troops and conduct night missions.

Interact like never before with detailed environments based on actual WWII locations. Go covert into the heart of the Third Reich, defend a Northern European submarine installation, and infiltrate the headquarters of the Japanese Army.

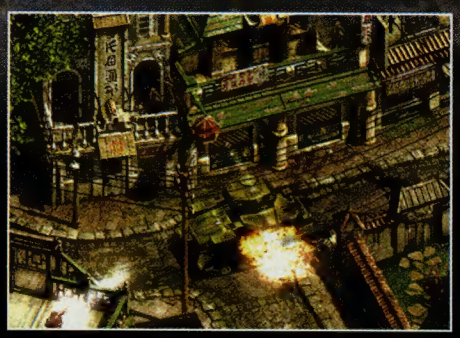
New 3D engine offers a 360° rotatable environment and seamless movement in/out of buildings, submarines, planes and under water.

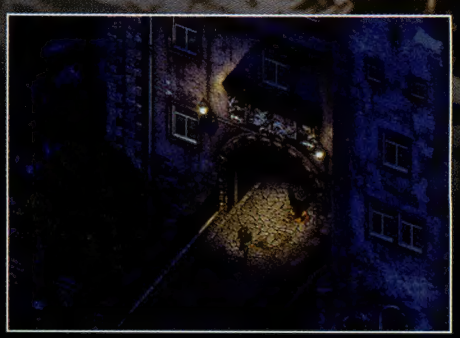
Complete simultaneous control of multiple gameplay windows in real time.

New commandos include a thief, a seductress, and a dog – adding stealth, distraction and distribution strategies.

Go into battles with others in a cooperative multiplayer mode.







RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

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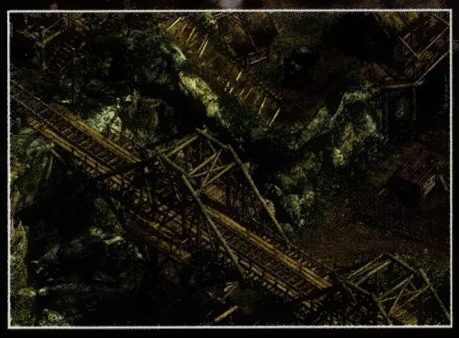
COMMANDOS® 2

PREPARE TO BE BLOWN AWAY.



Sergeant "Tiny" McHale
Expert in close combat & bladed weapons







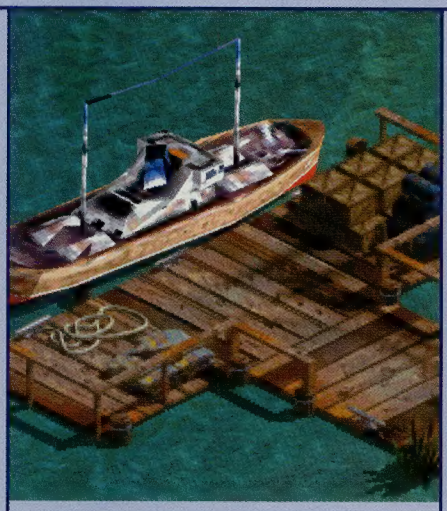
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PLAY BEFORE YOU PAY

BECAUSE IT MAKES SOUND FISCAL SENSE IN THESE TRYING ECONOMIC TIMES



TROPICO

tropico.godgames.com • Gathering of Developers
Pentium 200, 32MB RAM

The cold war is still frigid, and you're a recently installed dictator on a small Caribbean island. Needless to say, you can take several liberties with the law and enjoy a good life at the top of the food chain. Divert taxes into a Swiss bank account, bribe the military, and generally control the quality of life on the island. The demo guides you through it all with a thorough tutorial.

EVIL ISLANDS

www.nival.com • Fishtank Software
Pentium 233, 64MB RAM

You are Zak, an unlikely hero who awakens on a dock with a serious case of amnesia, armed with only a couple of meager spells and a knife. This RPG soon has you battling acid-spitting toads and wolves while in search of a friendly civilization and your identity.

Unfortunately, we can't provide technical support for the games contained on the disc. However, if the CD itself is scratched or defective, you can order a replacement from *http://support.imaginemedia.com*.

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EVEN MORE CONTRAPTIONS

www.theincrediblemachine.net • Sierra Attractions
Pentium 90, 32MB RAM

Possibly the most addictive game featured on the *PCG* CD in months. Part of a long-running series started in 1993, this demo features 11 contraptions, three two-player puzzles for head-to-head competition, and 33 parts you can use to build your own puzzles.

Z: STEEL SOLDIERS

www.zsteelsoldiers.com • EON Digital
Pentium 266, 64MB RAM

The sequel to 1996's underrated *Z* has arrived, and it pits two mega-corporations against each other in a futuristic RTS setting. The map is broken into territories that you can capture to accrue resources, which adds a unique twist to the typical RTS experience, as do the 3D models and real-time reflections.

THE POINT AFTER



DRIVER DREAMS

Smoke picks the winner of our *Links* course-design contest. Play it on this month's CD!



- Course: Golfcom Country Club — South Course
- Designer: Richard L. Doty

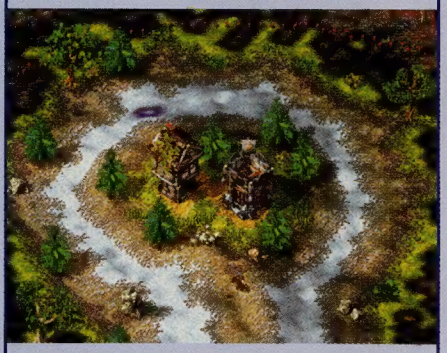
Amazingly, Richard tells me this is the first course he's ever designed — for any game! Golfcom is built on a fictional wildlife preserve, and you'll see plenty of evidence of this as you make your way through the 18 well-designed holes. Richard went all out, creating new textures, new .wav files, and more than 100 custom objects. The views are beautiful, the setting is unique, and the greens are fair but challenging. You'll definitely want to add this course to your collection. Enjoy your Sergio Garcia–signed driver, Richard — you've earned it.



ECHELON

echelon.bethsoft.com • Bethesda Softworks
Pentium 233, 64MB RAM

The graphical darling of this month's crop of games, *Echelon* puts you in the boots of the typical jock recruit bent on saving the galaxy. The demo gives you a taste of multiplayer gameplay, and offers two single-player instant-action modes that offer both land and air targets.



THE SETTLERS IV

www.bluebyte.net • Ubi Soft
Pentium 200, 64MB RAM

Topping the charts in Europe, the *Settlers* series lets you build a colony that survives on the fruits of its own labor. This new iteration has the evil god Morbus damned to Earth, where he and his Dark Tribe attempt to make life miserable for you and your peace-loving but strong-willed clan of oh-so-cute settlers.



PATCHES

Tropico 1.02
Elite Force 1.2
High Heat 2002 1.1
Myst III: Exile 1.1
StarCraft: Brood War 1.08b

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SAMURAI JACK

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AUGUST 10, 2001 7:00 PM E/P

CARTOON NETWORK

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MAX PAYNE™

EVERYTHING RIPPED APART IN A NEW YORK MINUTE... MAX PAYNE IS A MAN WITH NOTHING TO LOSE IN THE VIOLENT, COLD URBAN NIGHT. A FUGITIVE UNDERCOVER COP FRAMED FOR MURDER, AND NOW HUNTED BY COPS AND THE MOB. MAX IS A MAN WITH HIS BACK AGAINST THE WALL, FIGHTING A BATTLE HE CANNOT HOPE TO WIN. PREPARE FOR A NEW BREED OF DEEP ACTION GAME. PREPARE FOR PAIN... DEVELOPED BY REMEDY ENTERTAINMENT AND PRODUCED BY 3D REALMS, MAX PAYNE IS A RELENTLESS STORY-DRIVEN GAME ABOUT A MAN ON THE EDGE, FIGHTING FOR HIS JUSTICE WHILE UNCOVERING PLOT-TWISTS AND TWISTED THUGS IN THE GRITTY BOWELS OF NEW YORK DURING THE CENTURY'S WORST BLIZZARD.

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BLOOD

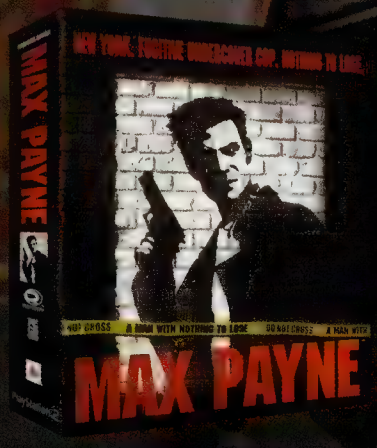
WINDOWS 95-98 PC CD ROM WINDOWS 2000/ME

PlayStation 2

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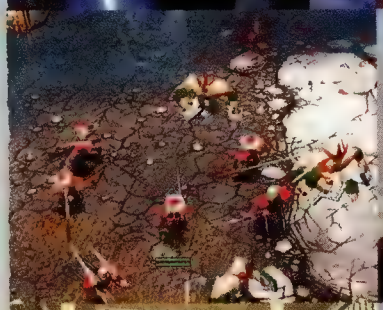
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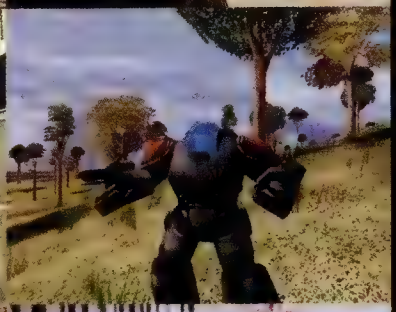
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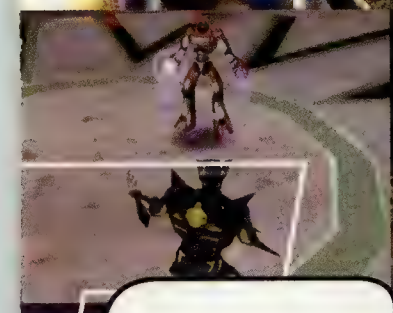
plus some other cool stuff. Just be the person to name the most screenshots on these two pages. (In case of a tie, we'll randomly pick a winner.) Email your answers to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with "Game On" in the subject header. See page 32 for the contest rules.

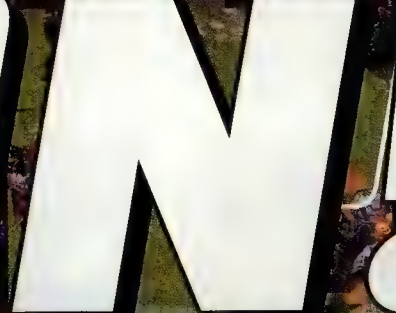
GAME







WOW!

What would the world's greatest gaming playground — the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) — hold for PC gamers this year? Good question, and as the *PC Gamer* editors traipsed down to the smog of a muggy May in L.A., we weren't entirely sure ourselves. With Microsoft making sure everyone saw the Xbox, and Nintendo stealing the day by unveiling a Nov. 5 GameCube release (three days before and $100 cheaper than Microsoft's console launch), the PC would get swallowed, right?



Oh so very wrong. In five years of attending E3 and seven years in the industry, I've never been so excited by a PC lineup boasting such incredible promise. The quality of pretty much all the PC titles on display was staggering. Even former PC naysayers — our peers from multi-format and console magazines — were singing the platform's praises.

So, credit to all the developers who made the show such a resounding success for the PC. And for you, dear reader, sit back and wallow in the glory of the astounding titles coming this year and next. If you ever needed an argument why PC games are going nowhere but upward, and why *PC Gamer* is the only magazine that will bring you the best information on the biggest of these games, then these 10 pages of the greatest in gaming goodness are your answer. We were blown away, and we think you'll be, too. Enjoy! — *Rob Smith*

ON!

THE *PCG* STAFF GETS HANDS-ON WITH E3'S AMAZING PC LINEUP



Reflective textures and real-time shadows help *Galaxies* blur the line between Verant's handicraft and George Lucas' movie magic.

STAR WARS GALAXIES

THE COLLECTIVE JAWS of the assembled throng of journalists hit the floor hard as the character onscreen was maneuvered to play a stunning game of chicken among the stomping metallic feet of a mammoth AT-AT. That was just for starters. Our demo of the Verant/LucasArts MMRPG collaboration also showcased different game worlds, from jungle terrain to the desert of Tatooine, highlighting how every element of *Star Wars* lore is being expertly melded into this massively playable world.

Everything is built to scale, including towering Imperial walkers and Jawa sandcrawlers, which in itself is an amazing feat. But even the AT-AT moment was forgotten as the character wandered around a sandcrawler to reveal a gargantuan Krayt Dragon. As it lumbered forward, the texture detail on its hide was absolutely amazing, the animation was as fluid as it's possible to be, and the overall impact of its roaring visage was the most memorable moment of this E3.

Raph Koster, creative director for Sony Online Entertainment, confirmed that *Galaxies* would have eight playable races (Wookiee, Rodian like Greedo, Bothan, Twi'lek, Mon Calamari, Zabrak like Darth Maul, Trandoshan, and humans), with creatures and settings pulled from all *five* movies — yep, that includes *Episode II*.

Of the 100 different creatures, many will support varied texture sets, sizes, and AI libraries to keep you guessing with every encounter. Your character will also be customizable, with Zabrak characters able to skin their own tattoos, and around 80 intuitive emotes are planned. (Type a smiley face into the chat interface, and your character will smile, for example.)

Playing from a first- or third-person view, you'll see re-creations of all the familiar settings and objects from the movies. The Tatooine speeder on display looked stunning with its GeForce3-powered environment and bump mapping. Likewise, familiar characters will play a role, such as Jabba the Hutt, who can provide quests and information. Characters themselves will be able to set missions, and a huge skill system will force players to do certain acts before acquiring skills.

Not all skills will be readily available to all players. "Becoming a Jedi will be incredibly hard," says Koster. "You have to strictly adhere to it and live it from the beginning, and all of your actions are tracked." But you *will* be able to join the Dark Side. Skills will be acquired "*Magic: The Gathering*–style," reveals Kosher, in an effort to support diverse play styles and not have gameplay focused entirely around combat.

Player involvement in the game world even goes so far as to allow the founding of towns, where an elected mayor can build structures and set laws (as an Imperial town, or more boldly as a Rebel enclave). Individual player houses can be decorated and kept secure. You'll also be able to buy and program your own droids, using a programming technique similar to that in *Mind Rover.* They can even guard your possessions while you're offline.

Combat will include ranged weapons, and though it will be in real time, it'll use some form of RPG system of determining success. More details on this will be revealed through the course of the game's development.

And if that's not enough, the designers confirmed that there will be no "permanent" death. Nor will there be the tedium of corpse retrieval, camping (creatures will spawn randomly), and eating and drinking. And did I mention the space-based expansion set that will let you fly X-, Y-, and B-Wings, TIE Fighters, and TIE Interceptors, swooping over 100,000-polygon Star Destroyers? This add-on is slated for release after the main planet-bound game. Can you wait? We can't. — *RS*

Developer: Verant; Publisher: LucasArts; Release date: late '02

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

DEVELOPER 2015 WAS HARD at work before E3 completing the Omaha Beach level of this *Quake III*–powered World War II action game. Those efforts paid off in spades with one of the most stunning demos of mind-blowingly intense combat this veteran gamer has ever witnessed.

It's easy to paint the picture: Imagine the opening 20 minutes of *Saving Private Ryan*, as the troops land and are cut to ribbons by a tracer onslaught from the evil Hun. Now put yourself in first-person perspective, three rows back on the landing craft heading to the beach. The guy in front pukes, and the craft next to yours takes a shell, sending one poor soul 30 feet in the air. When your boat door opens, the front two troops are cut down in an instant, and your only instinct is to get the hell into the water.

Amid absolutely stunning environmental sound effects and a cacophony of bullet fire and artillery



You'll be able to ride and even breed the dewback (not her!) in *Galaxies.*



Galaxies' designers are "shooting for a very cinematic concept" — and they're right on track.



The disturbingly realistic sand spray from artillery blasts makes even stout heads cower.

THE BEST OF SHOW?



Highlight of show? LucasArts bringing great *Star Wars* gaming back to the PC.



Waist-deep in the surf with shells exploding nearby, you still have to follow orders.

explosions, you run up the beach, stopping to take directions from officers and stare in bewilderment as our brave boys are cut down in their prime. What we saw was truly disturbing. Though work is evidently needed on your squaddies' AI, the impact of this stunningly detailed re-creation will leave WWII addicts in heaven and D-Day veterans motioning for the Kleenex box.

This demonstration of staggering power — a brutal re-enactment of the horror that was the Normandy landings — placed *Allied Assault* atop our list of Best of Show. Simply stunning. — *RS*

2015; EA; late '01

REPUBLIC

WHILE *REPUBLIC* HAS MADE NARY a whisper on our side of the big pond, it's already graced magazine covers in the UK, home of developer Elixir Studios. Most of that attention has been focused on the talent of the company's CEO, Demis Hassabis, who created *Theme Park* with Peter Molyneux when he was just 14 years old, and later spent a year working on *Black & White* at Lionhead. He's ably supported by lead programmer Dave Silver, who scored the highest marks ever on his final exams at the prestigious Cambridge University.

Hassabis' first solo project, *Republic: The Revolution*, looks brilliant. A technology demo over 12 months ago showcased an engine that could zoom from a complete bird's-eye view of a city right down to individually rendered leaves on a tree. "Whoop," we went, not knowing where all this was heading. Well, the fog has cleared, and the future is bright for this strategy game that simulates a political struggle in the fictional republic of Novistrana.

You play as the leader of an upstart political faction in a breakaway republic, aiming to control your town, move to a district capital, and finally, become ruler of the whole country. Along the way you'll learn how to balance a couple of resources, and will conduct actions to ensure full control of the populace.

Through the game you'll establish your faction status with your leanings in such areas as temperament, religion, violence level, and so on. Perform any of the 250 actions on the populace at large, or on individual civilians such as opposing faction leaders, and it'll affect your standing. Meanwhile, the computer is tracking your affiliations and will create your diametric opposite to compete with you. For example, if you're an atheist, the game will send a preacher to pontificate in a public square. Anyone listening may be turned to his side, and you've got a choice now on how you deal with him. For maximum fun, hire a



All that guy in front needs is a mirror, and he'd be Tom Hanks in *Saving Private Ryan*.



Your mission objective: find the bangalore (while dodging bullets and flying shrapnel).



Max Payne **stepped out of the shadows and into the well-deserved limelight.**

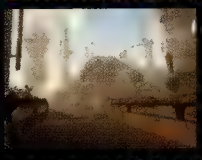
THE REST OF SHOW

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

3D Realms kept its word and didn't demo any playable *DNF* code, feeding speculation over what the game's actually like to play. The short movie that was released highlighted a variety of vehicles that Duke will either drive or be a passenger in. Though the re-creation of Las Vegas certainly *looked* impressive, we still need convincing that it's going to be fun to play. I guess that will come only "when it's done." — *RS*

3D Realms; G.O.D.; winter '01

ELDER SCROLLS: MORROWIND



It seems that every time we look at this amazing RPG the developer has upped the polygon count for the environments. But while the locales won't support dynamic LOD, Bethesda promises horizon fogging will vary according to your system specs. As for a soundtrack, while it has yet to be finalized, Bethesda plans to use MP3s that fade in and out based on whether there's a confrontation onscreen. — *JW*

Bethesda; late '01

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

Our recent visit to id Software gave us the full skinny on the *Wolf* phenomenon, and the playable build showed off some of the great graphics work. With enemy AI still being tweaked, and other inventive gameplay options being incorporated into the traditional run-and-gun fare, *Wolf* is headed straight for first-person-shooter stardom. — *RS*

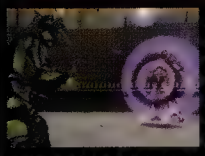
Gray Matter; Activision; Nov. '01

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

The three races in this new 3D *Age* game — Greek, Norse, and Egyptian — have distinct styles and units. From minotaurs to frost giants and the sphinx, the mythological creatures will be valuable units, doing the dirty work alongside regular RTS units while you build stunning god powers to unleash in blistering style on the detailed 3D environments. A tighter storyline, pushed by scripted, in-engine cut-scenes, will push the pace along. It's likely that Ensemble will fix the camera angle to avoid any potential player confusion in swirling around the 3D environments. — *RS*

Ensemble; Microsoft; late '01

ONE MUST FALL: BATTLEGROUNDS



This great-looking 3D fighting game now sports power-ups strewn about the maps that are as fun to look at as they are to use. One, a deceptively harmless radio, calls in a full-on air strike on your enemy for a great pyrotechnic display. A strong mod-friendly design should also help this unique title see the light of day. — *JW*

Diversions; TBD; spring '02

C&C: RENEGADE

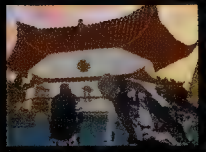
The extra time spent perfecting the graphics engine of this eagerly anticipated FPS has paid off handsomely, giving extra kick to the inventive gameplay. Filled with black humor and stuffed with nods to the original RTS game, *Renegade* also sports levels that are freakin' *huge*.

The coolest enhancement was seeing that you can now fully explore all the structures from *Command & Conquer* — and, in the case of demolition missions, blow them to smithereens.

With clever enemies and spectacular scripted moments bringing the *C&C* battlefield to life, Westwood's foray into first-person action is looking like a blistering success. — *DM*

Westwood; EA; fall '01

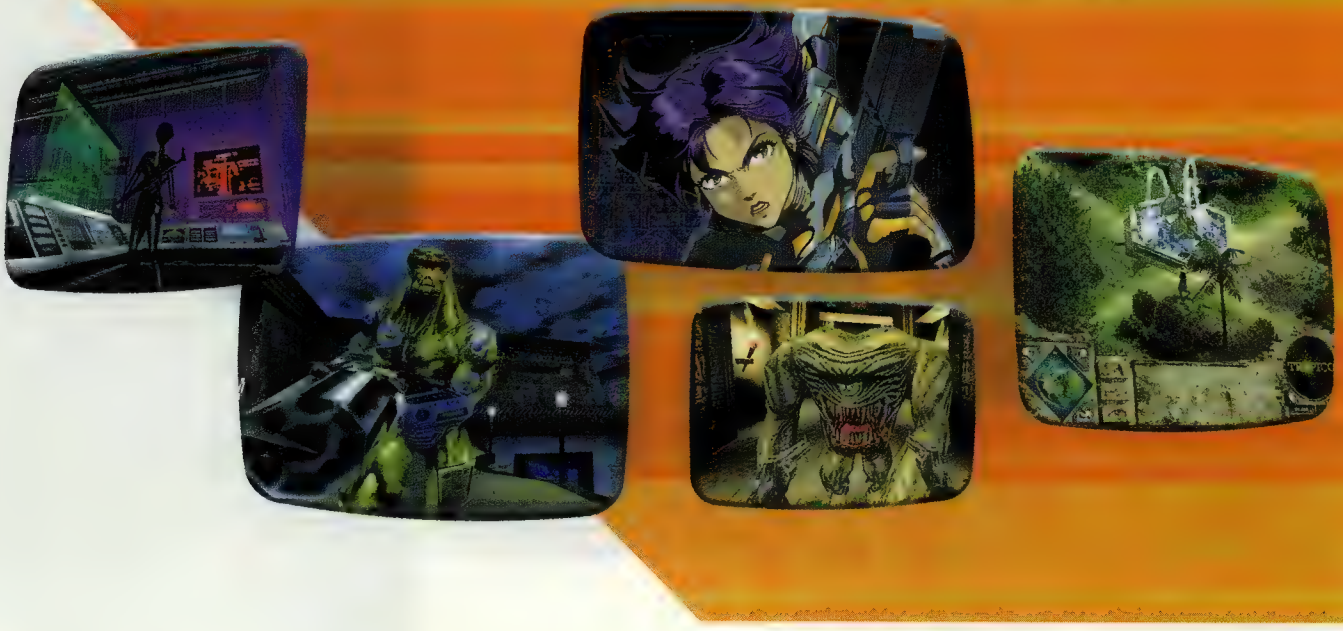
ROGUE SPEAR: BLACK THORN



This stand-alone expansion to *Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear* will include 10 single-player and six multiplayer maps, as well as a whopping 14 new weapons. The single-player episode has you tracking and foiling a copycat terrorist community that is re-creating acts of terrorism from the past half-century. — *LK*

Ubi Soft; Oct. '01


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THE REST OF SHOW

OZZY'S BLACK SKIES



This 3D flight/combat game in the mold of *Drakan*'s aerial duels features the mythology and vocal stylings of rock sod Ozzy Osbourne. As the Ozzman himself, you hop on the back of one of 24 creatures and take to the skies in over 30 unique levels. Three factions (Pariah, Chrysalis, and Virtwwyn) inspired by the time periods in Ozzy's life — ranging from the crazy early days through Black Sabbath and culminating in his more recent "power ballad" period — are fighting for supremacy in the world of Fraewyn. And frankly, you haven't lived until you've heard His Royal Ozzness pick up a health icon and coo "Oooh, now *that* feels better!" — *CO*

■■■ iRock; winter '01

SIGMA

Improved texturing and a more streamlined resource system are certainly ensuring that this original take on the RTS gets continued attention. Though the combat animations between the crazy creatures are still woeful, we expect them to improve over the next few months, and for the unique qualities of *Sigma* to really fulfill their potential. — *RS*

■■■ Relic; Microsoft; Q1 '02

STRONGHOLD

Stronghold should appeal to fans of castle-building — and castle-toppling. In single- or multiplay, you build up an elaborate castle and try to defend it, while looking for ways to siege your enemy's. Historically accurate castle constructions are replete with boiling oil traps and cave-digging to bring walls tumbling down. Should be a fun niche title. — *DM*

■■■ Firefly; G.O.D.; summer '01

PLANETSIDE



The demo of this persistent-world first-person shooter had snipers picking off opponents from long distances, and duos taking lethal vehicles out for spins with one man at the wheel and the passenger at the controls of a fearsome minigun. It blew the pants off the Xbox *Halo* demonstration.

Gameplay mechanics are now being finalized: a player will join one of the game's three factions, but lone-wolf "jobs" can be taken on a mercenary basis to appease fans of a quick-and-dirty action experience. For the rest of us, the persistent world will ebb and flow with the tides of the war. The plan is for *PlanetSide* to unfold in real time over several years' worth of warfare. — *DM*

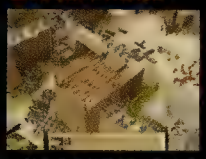
■■■ Verant; summer '02

REAL WAR

This real-world military-based RTS is making progress toward a late-summer release. E3 was the first time we've seen it running with 3D hardware support, and while Rival is still tweaking animations and art, the game just keeps looking better and better. — *CO*

■■■ Rival; S&S Interactive; Aug. '01

PRAETORIANS



Like Pyro's *Commandos*, *Praetorians* is a purely tactical game based on the historically accurate armed guard of the Roman emperor. There are no resources, and once you lose your units, the game's over. Rather than controlling one soldier at a time, entire battalions are treated as a single unit. Strategy fans should expect a game that focuses on mass troop movements and historically accurate tactics. — *LK*

■■■ Pyro; Eidos; spring '02

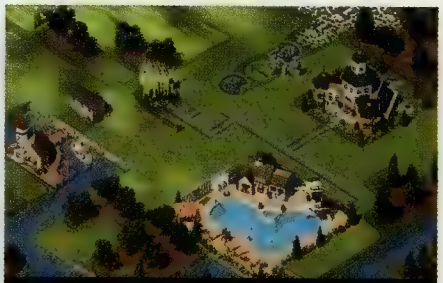
AGE OF WONDERS II

Holy crap — this smashing sequel to one of the greatest fantasy-based strategy games ever has come a long way since we first previewed it back in March. It's hard to believe its release date is still so far off. The most notable change since our last look is the inclusion of an attractive, useful interface. We'd give our left kidney to play *AoWII* before next year. It's looking even better than the original! — *GV*

■■■ Triumph; G.O.D.; summer '02



Republic's game world is incredibly detailed, down to the leaves on trees.



Constructing the perfect country-club facility is only part of the *SimGolf* challenge.

thug to "persuade" him to stop. That not enough? Hire a hitman to persuade him, permanently.

Amazingly, every civilian in the game looks unique, due to a mix-and-match methodology that melds certain parts of 500 head types to create millions of possible looks. The attention to detail is fantastic, with cigarettes emitting a steady smoke stream, car exhausts giving off fumes, and more.

With Hassabis invoking a brainiac charm in the promotion of *Republic*, it's in capable hands. There's certainly an element of Peter Molyneux's crafty salesmanship at work, but the proof is always on the screen, and the game certainly looks spectacular. And who can't like a game that includes among its "actions" such beauties as "Form Fight Club," which lets you gain influence with the disenfranchised middle-class (by convening its members in darkened alleys to beat the crap out of each other)? And that's not to forget "Buy satellite time," "Charity Gala" (to see limos turn up at a big red-carpet affair), and "Big brother" (which invokes paranoia in everyone). It'll be good to be a faction leader of this republic. — *RS*

■■■ **Elixir; Eidos; late '01**

SID MEIER'S SIMGOLF

I COULD HAVE SPENT months guessing what Sid Meier's secret project was, and I wouldn't even have come close. Already quite near release, Meier's golf course–building simulation was signed by EA and fit neatly into the branding style of the *Sims* series.

SimGolf puts you in charge of a plot of land with the need to create a compelling course, and keep the hackers and the pros interested in your creations. Not a course designer in the *Links* or *Jack Nicklaus* format, *SimGolf* has you carve out holes; place sand traps, water hazards, and the like; and then track the responses from the players attracted to the course.

It's the tough-to-please golf crowd that keeps your strategic mind stretched as you pursue the business requirements of manning a course, maintaining it, providing facilities, and even competing in tournaments over your own holes — all the while adding to the course to get to the 18 required holes, and ensuring time is left over to build the all-important 19th. In simple terms, think of a *RollerCoaster Tycoon*–style game (or even *SimCity*) with golfers, a staggering number of charts, graphs, advice, feedback, and extensive interaction with the patrons.

SimGolf also taps into *The Sims*' successful Internet support policy, with individual holes and possibly entire courses available for download.

Though the game's balanced to let less strategy-savvy players enjoy the fun of creating a world-class resort, the depth of detail available through each of the buttons, tabs, and menus will keep stat-heads in golfing heaven. — *RS*

■■■ **Firaxis; EA; late '01**

STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

PUT THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE in the hands of the creators of the *Baldur's Gate* series and you've got a surefire hit, right? Well, even the demo of a very early version of this third-person-perspective RPG (as opposed to *BG*'s distanced isometric view) sparked excitement. A brand-new engine is allowing a strong focus on character development and relationships with other characters in the game world. A new animation system enables characters' eyes, lips and fingers to shift and flex realistically, with all the voice-over work lip-synching accurately with the onscreen models.

Set some 4,000 years before the movies, the game lets you develop your own character from a selection of three races and six classes, including Jedi, soldiers, scouts, and "scoundrels." Over 100 skills are promised, addressing such details as droid reprogramming, computer hacking, and stealth.

Combat will be real-time, with the ability to pause and issue commands to your party. Over 50 Force powers will be emulated, with all the faves from the movies being expanded by unique powers.

The adventure itself will cover eight planets (Tatooine doing desert duty while the usual water, jungle, and ice planets will no doubt appear). The designers are hoping to give the game world a dynamic, open feel. "We want to make the player feel a sense of freedom — that you can do missions when you want," says Lead Designer James Ohlen. The plan is to have multiple solutions to missions that incorporate stealth, roleplaying, or action. The ability to follow the Light or the Dark Side of the Force should throw up its own conundrums: would you rather go for Force healing powers, or Force Lightning or Choke and run with the bad guys?

While the game mechanics are still to be decided, Ohlen confirmed that BioWare is continuing discussions with Wizards of the Coast over using a variation of its new d20 roleplaying system.

A number of sub-missions will also take advantage of the 3D engine. You'll be able to take time off and earn cash by competing in racer tournament



Sir Fanboy says: *Freedom Force* and *Bridge Commander* are looking sweet.

Infogrames and Spellbound Present

DESPERADOS

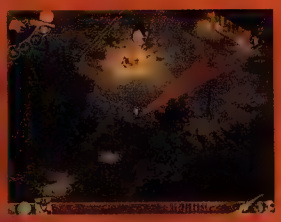
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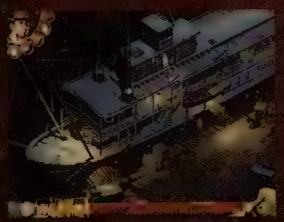
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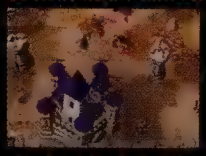
Animated Violence

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THE REST OF SHOW

WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS



Aesthetically, *WarCraft III* gets better at every viewing. Unit animations are incredibly fluid, and the rendered animations that portray your currently selected hero ooze personality. The impact of the hero units on gameplay is also coming clearer into focus, with these major badasses dominating battles with their unique skill sets. It shouldn't be any surprise that Blizzard has got its act together after going through a few faltering moments. This game will sell millions, and it'll deserve them all. — *GV*

■■■ Blizzard; winter '01

LOOSE CANNON

This game has been in limbo longer than Pauly Shore's career. Ubi Soft scooped it up from Digital Anvil and handed it to its newly acquired developer, Sinister Games (*Dukes of Hazzard*). The problem is, *Loose Cannon* looks like it's been sitting on the shelf for a year or two (which it has). The police-themed driving/shooter hybrid has some nifty ideas, and a cool "living" city concept, but there's still not much actual game. — *DM*

■■■ Sinister; Ubi Soft; fall '01

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS 2



The coders are implementing some cunningly realistic AI into this WWII tactical combat game. If a German captain commands his squad to haul ass to a guard post, they'll run — but only until they are out of his line of sight, when they lazily slow to a stroll. "Line of sound" will play a major role, too, and a quiet, stealthy approach will be rewarded. The game will also take advantage of the excellent *Mafia* physics engine for German Tiger tanks and several other controllable vehicles. Any excuse to defeat Nazis is good by us. — *LK*

■■■ Illusion Softworks; G.O.D.; fall '01

AQUANOX

If you've been in a deep-sea depression since the cancellation of the TV series *SeaQuest DSV*, good news is coming ashore in the form of this aquatic *Wing Commander*–style adventure, in which you play a submarine commander protecting humanity's future under water.

Over 30 single-player missions, nine subs, and 40-plus enemies (including some Godzilla-sized ocean creatures) propel the action with some great graphical effects. And multiplayer deathmatch and teamplay modes will keep you coming back for more in this sequel to *Archimedean Dynasty*. — *CO*

■■■ Massive Development; Fishtank; Oct. '01

IRON STORM



It's 1964, and World War I never ended. This gritty first-person action game, running on an unknown graphics engine, could stand toe to toe with the best of them, and had a style that was unlike anything we'd ever seen. The mix of pseudo-realistic weaponry and trench warfare makes *Iron Storm* worth keeping an eye on. — *LK*

■■■ 4X Studio; Wanadoo; Q2 '02

EMPIRE EARTH

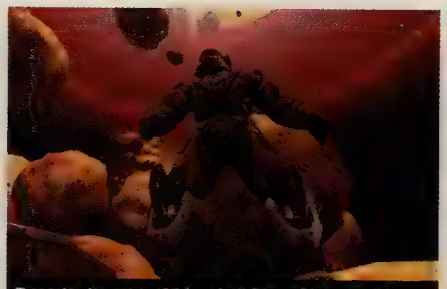
This audacious RTS has a sweet 3D engine supporting the terrific concept of historical conflict on an epic scale. It starts at the beginning of time with units wielding clubs and stones, and ends well in the future, when lasers and rail guns are the weapons of war. Such incredible scope means balancing all the units will be vital, and this element appears to be right on track. — *LK*

■■■ Stainless Steel; Sierra; summer '01

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE 2

Raven's follow-up to its gory shooter showed much progress on the level construction and detailed texturing work. The damage models still weren't complete, but the character models look terrific. Raven is squeezing everything it can from the *Quake III* engine, and it shows. — *LK*

■■■ Raven; Activision; winter '01



Deep in the asteroid level of *Unreal II*, even the rocks look amazing.



Your *Unreal II* sidekick provides two very good reasons never to leave your ship.

mini-games; you'll man the gun turrets of your freighter (which also acts as a home base); and you'll dodge asteroids at the controls. In-engine cutscenes will keep the story flowing at a fast pace, and given BioWare's track record, expect a mammoth, sprawling plotline to take full advantage of the vague mythology so far removed from that of the movies.

In such accomplished hands, this game's already a no-brainer, and *PC Gamer* will be front and center to bring you the full scoop on BioWare's plans in an upcoming issue. — *RS*

■■■ **BioWare; LucasArts; late '02**

UNREAL II

UNREAL II IS IN FIRST PLACE for the title of best-looking PC game. Frankly, this game is incredible. From the beautifully detailed starship interiors to the gloriously rendered outdoor vistas, it's great reason to fit your machine with a shiny new GeForce3. One scene during the E3 demo was a CTF level set smack in the middle of an asteroid field. Using a grappling beam, you'll hop from rock to rock to get from one base to another. The level is an incredible sight, with asteroids above, below, and all around. Each asteroid is meticulously textured and the overall look is reminiscent of the asteroid scenes from *The Empire Strikes Back*. Oh wondrous PC, is there anything you can't do? — *LK*

■■■ **Legend; Infogrames; Q1 '02**

STAR TREK: BRIDGE COMMANDER

WE BACK WINNERS HERE at *PC Gamer*, and our October 2000 cover insight into *Bridge Commander* unveiled what could be the coolest space-combat sim yet. Our recent revisit enhanced that assessment. The emphasis in this *Star Trek* epic isn't on button-mashing — in fact, you don't even have to steer the starship if you don't want to. This game is all about being the butt in the captain's chair, making the crucial real-time decisions that define a Starfleet commander.

The E3 build of *Bridge Commander* showed off the clever station-by-station command menus that you use to run the show. Hopping from the helmsman's station to the weapons officer to the science officer, you get to call the shots as battle rages all around you. You can watch the firefight from an exterior camera, or interface entirely as the captain would — through the bridge screen in front of you.

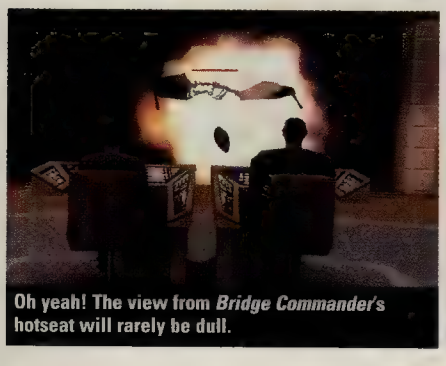
The NetImmerse-powered graphics are looking crisp indeed, with fantastic face models and speech-synthesis technology putting a fine sheen on the characters. The story and dialogue are obviously the work of serious *Trek* talents, featuring heaps of witty repartee and the usual *Trek* brand of tongue-twisting technojargon. It's no surprise when you learn that long-time *Trek* writer D.C. Fontana has put her personal stamp on the story.

The highest compliment we can pay *Bridge Commander* is that even those staffers among us who aren't *Trek* fans are eager to get ahold of it. The desire to test our skills in the hotseat of Starfleet command is just too strong, and this game looks to pull it off brilliantly. — *DM*

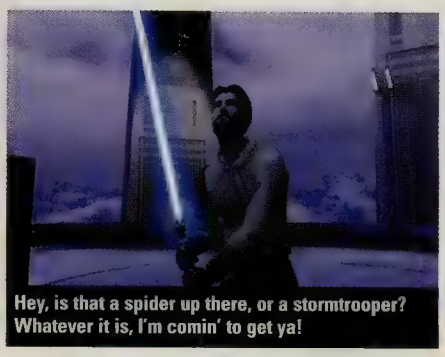
■■■ **Totally Games; Activision; fall '01**

STAR WARS JEDI KNIGHT II: OUTCAST

LUCASARTS HESITATED TO GIVE Xbox-fated *Obi-Wan* the auspicious subtitle *Dark Forces 3* when we featured the game on our May 2000 cover. The reason was unveiled at this year's E3, as hordes of craning heads crowded around a 21-inch monitor displaying some of the most beautiful lightsaber duels this side of big-screen Tatooine.



Oh yeah! The view from *Bridge Commander*'s hotseat will rarely be dull.

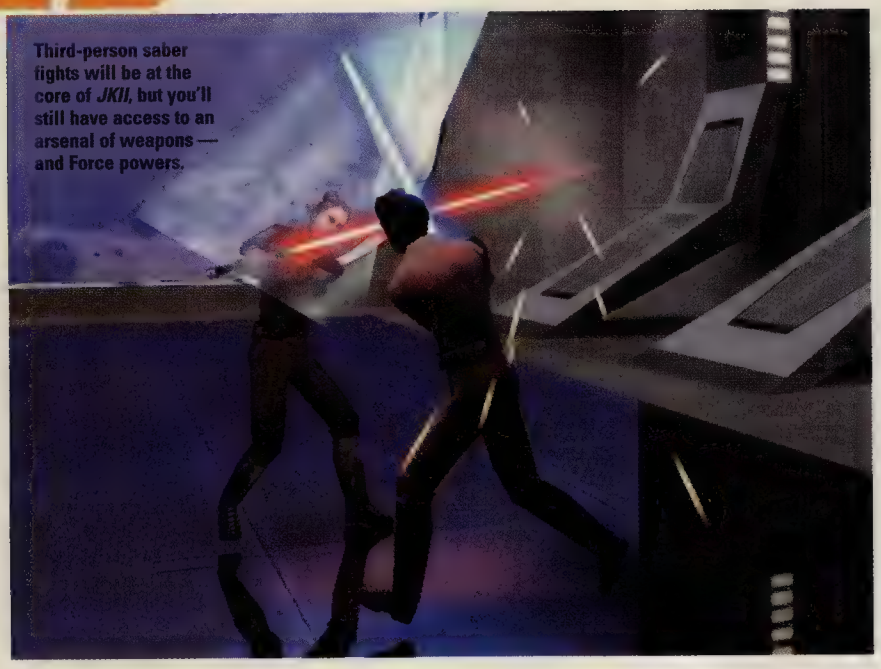


Hey, is that a spider up there, or a stormtrooper? Whatever it is, I'm comin' to get ya!



Star Wars Galaxies: I don't even play MMRPGs, but I will soon enough.

E3 GAME ON!



Third-person saber fights will be at the core of *JKII*, but you'll still have access to an arsenal of weapons — and Force powers.

Developed inside a Wisconsin igloo by first-class design house Raven Software, *Outcast* is promised sometime next year. While little is known about the storyline, we were given a welcome taste of the technology. Raven's again licensed the *Quake III* engine, and is building on much of the code they crafted for *Elite Force*. The excellent teammate AI will make a comeback, putting an end to the days of simple mano-a-mano saber dueling. After only four months of working on the project, the team had a demo with several Jedis fighting at once, on a reflective floor, in a scene that challenged Darth Maul's climactic defeat in *Episode I*. Sabers blur just like in the films, and you'll dodge and flip like members of Cirque du Soleil as you reprise your role as Kyle Katarn. When sabers clash, a flash of white fills the screen, and the familiar Skywalker Sound assets spark into life. And when a lightsaber haphazardly brushes a wall or structure, it leaves a glowing molten scar in its wake.

Thankfully, LucasArts promises the game will be closer in length to *Jedi Knight* than *Elite Force*. We don't know what to expect plotwise, but a multiplayer component is confirmed, and you'll be limited to following the good path in the single-player game, unlike the second *Dark Forces* installment. As for potential tie-ins with *Episode II*, only George and a few tight-lipped game designers know. We'll keep you informed as we uncover more. — *JW*

Raven; LucasArts; spring '02

MASTER OF ORION 3

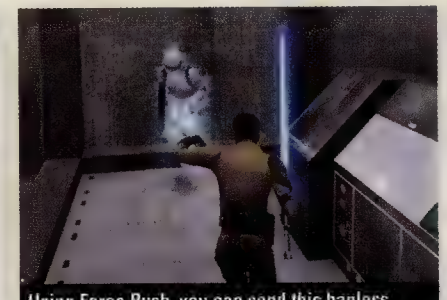
WHAT IS ARGUABLY ONE of the greatest PC strategy series of all time is about to become a trilogy. Infogrames is now in charge of ensuring *MOO3* tops the remaining fanbase's expectations. A key to achieving this is what Senior Producer Constantine Hantzopoulos (a veteran of Looking Glass Studios, and designer on *Flight Unlimited II*, among others) calls "the fifth X." While the previous *MOO* games were centered on exploration, expansion, exploitation, and extermination, *MOO3* adds experience.

An integral factor in how this "fifth X" affects gameplay is its function in winning the game. This unexplained element also incorporates something known as the Antaran mystery, which, if answered, tells the origin of all life in the galaxy. To solve this mystery you must find artifacts scattered throughout space. You'll still be able to win the game the old ways, such as being elected Master of Orion or winning through economic superiority.

One of the biggest changes being made to the classic *MOO* gameplay is the shift from turn-based



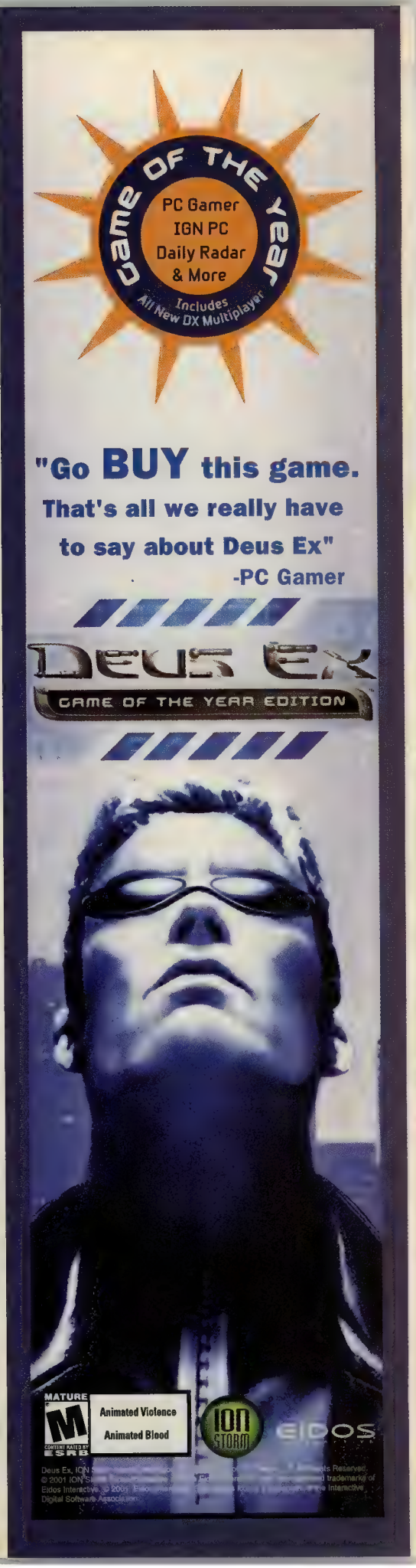
Are you seeing patrols through a security cam in *Jedi Knight II*, or watching a movie? Tough call.



Using Force Push, you can send this hapless stormtrooper through the window.



The best thing I saw at this year's E3 would have to be *Unreal II*.



THE REST OF SHOW

MYTH III: THE WOLF AGE

This third chapter in the extremely popular *Myth* series is a prequel to the original game. Set a thousand years before *Myth: The Fallen Lords*, it focuses on a new hero and many new races. And, for the first time ever, the entire game world and all its inhabitants will be rendered in true 3D glory. The developer also seems to have a good handle on correcting some of the control confusions that caused problems with the earlier *Myth* games, ensuring a focus on the small-scale tactical combat, and not fighting with the camera. — *GV*

■■■ Mumbo Jumbo; G.O.D.; Nov. '01

ARX FATALIS



This could be one of the most detailed first-person RPGs ever. Intense interaction with everything in the game world means you can kill a chicken, skin it, and grill it for food. You can even make bread if you find the proper ingredients. Another slick feature is that spells are cast through mouse movements similar to *Black & White*'s gestures. — *LK*

■■■ Arkane; Fishtank; Q1 '02

SURVIVOR: AUSTRALIAN OUTBACK

It was going to happen sooner or later... The PC game treatment of the hit CBS reality show looks grim. From what we saw, you can play as any of the cast from *Survivor: Australian Outback*, with each person sporting his or her own set of attributes. As in the show, you participate in various trials and try to be the last one voted off the island. Sadly, the trials seem to be little more than clicking your mouse to move your 3D character back and forth while carrying wood or water. Still, it's money in the bank for WizardWorks, and will probably fly off the shelves at your local Wal-Mart. — *LK*

■■■ Magic Lantern; WizardWorks; Q3 '01

RED FACTION



The slick new Geo-Mod engine allowing for destructible terrain is only part of the story of this incredibly impressive FPS. Similarities to *Half-Life*'s gameplay are obvious, but that's not a bad thing. A word of advice: avoid the PlayStation 2 version and hang tight for the PC incarnation. — *LK*

■■■ Volition; THQ; Sept. '01

ETHERLORDS

Heroes of Might and Magic meets *Magic: The Gathering* in this turn-based strategy game. The twist here is that combat plays out much like the popular card game Magic. Topping off this intriguing mix are some of the most gorgeous 3D graphics we've seen in a strategy game. — *LK*

■■■ Nival; Fishtank; Nov. '01

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

We broke the story on this new squad-based shooter last issue. Given its progress, the folks at Red Storm must be coding like the wind. The game looks great, and with a bit of luck, it should be on target for release later this year. — *LK*

■■■ Red Storm; Ubi Soft; fall '01

CALL OF CTHULHU



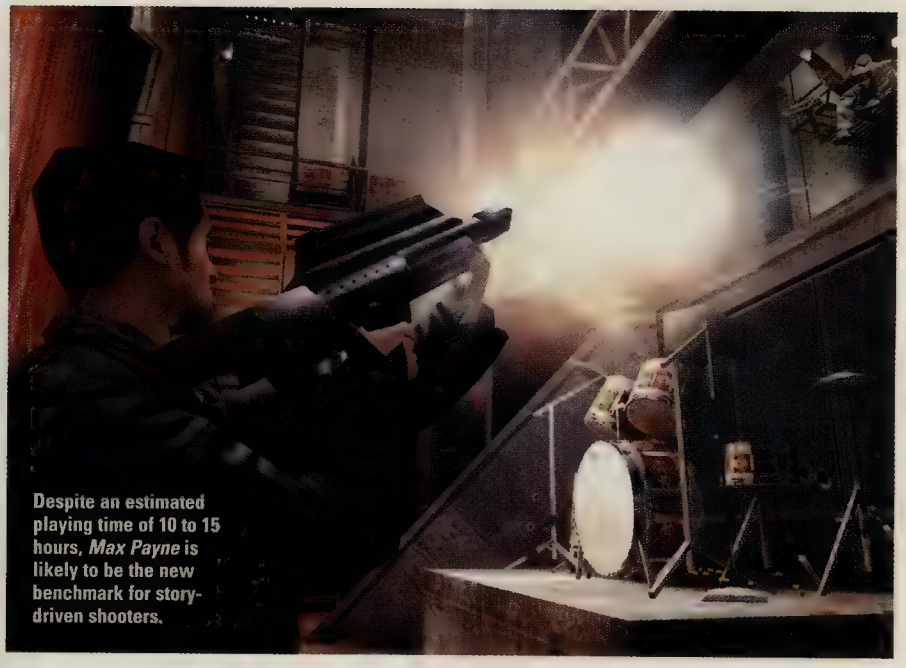
While *Undying* was great, *Call of Cthulhu* has the potential to beat its pants off with its Lovecraftian terror and dark graphics. One cool touch is the absence of an onscreen interface: you check your health by looking at your in-game body, and check ammo by opening the chamber on your revolver and counting the rounds. — *LK*

■■■ Headfirst; Fishtank; Q1 '02

IMPERIUM GALACTICA III

No. 3 in the *Imperium Galactica* space RTS saga was a real eye-opener. Gorgeous 3D graphics greeted us, including a zooming feature that you have to see to believe, letting you smoothly pan from outside a galaxy right up to your ship in seconds. And a demonstration of the game's weapons and shield effects was nothing less than amazing. We'll be keeping an eye on this one. — *CO*

■■■ Philos Labs; TBA



Despite an estimated playing time of 10 to 15 hours, *Max Payne* is likely to be the new benchmark for story-driven shooters.

to real-time combat with 3D graphics. Purists really shouldn't be worried about *MOO3* turning into a click-fest (though it's a fear expressed by many diehard fans): battles will focus on massive fleet movements rather than *Homeworld*-style micromanagement, and all the action still takes place on a 2D plane. The purpose behind this change is to lessen the amount of time you spend on battles, without losing the overall tactical aspect that they represent in galactic domination. Other new additions include spies, which can be used to assassinate leaders or especially pesky enemy ship captains, and star lanes that speed up transit time between planets.

Improved graphics and the sheer size of the universe (randomly generated galaxies can now have up to 256 stars, each with a max of eight planets, with up to five moons each — whew!) should have *MOO* fans drooling in anticipation. — *LK*

■■■ **Quicksilver; Infogrames; Q1 '02**

MAX PAYNE

ONE COP. ONE CITY. Ten thousand bullets. We've gushed sufficiently about *Max Payne*'s stunning combat sequences, its *Matrix*-like "bullet time" effects that you activate to get a jump on the enemy, and the savage dark humor of its comic-book interludes. It tops our list of anticipated games for 2001, and is deserving of a place here just to show off this latest superlative screenshot! — *DM*

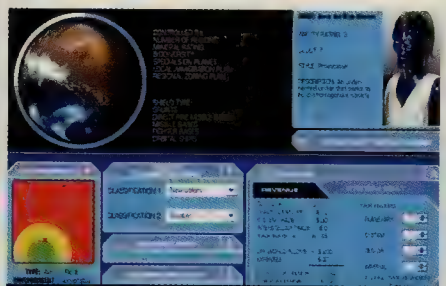
■■■ **Remedy; G.O.D.; July 17, '01**

MAFIA

SET IN A FICTIONAL CITY reminiscent of 1930s Chicago, *Mafia* takes 10 square kilometers of 3D virtual reality and brings it to bustling life. You are Thomas Angelo, recently accepted into the Family and working as a foot soldier. With high aspirations, you embark on mission after mission, trying to please the Godfather while eluding the authorities. Jobs include bank heists, various "hits," and supplying sleepeasies with nectar during prohibition.

While you can walk throughout the city on foot, and even use the functioning elevated train, the most amazing part of *Mafia* is the physics engine and the 60 driveable vehicles that take advantage of it. Not only can you take them off road and into the farmland and catch air over makeshift ramps, but you can also shoot their tires and windows when in hot pursuit. The dashboards are rendered in high resolution, and the realistic shocks make this third-person shooter a top-notch driving game as well. — *JW*

■■■ **Illusion Softworks; G.O.D.; fall '01**



More so than its predecessors, *Master of Orion 3* will focus on strategy over micromanagement.



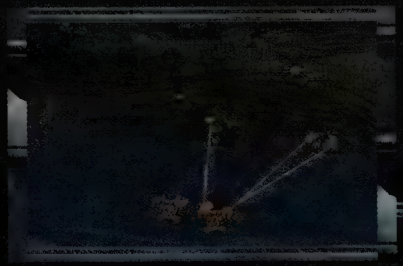
Mafia's reworked graphics engine will spike zoot-suit polygon counts.



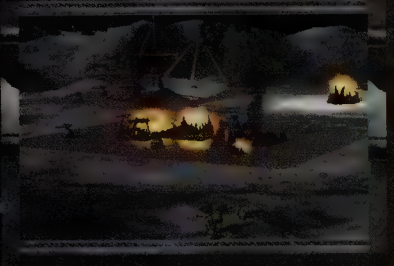
■■■ Fishtank's *Etherlords* and G.O.D.'s *Age of Wonders II* both stole my heart. *Sigh...*

A UNIT OF 40 FOOT KILLING MACHINES IS ONLY DWARFED BY THE MAN WHO COMMANDS IT.





COMMANDER, YOUR MISSION IS SIMPLE: DISPATCH A COMPANY OF MECHWARRIORS INTO BATTLE TO DESTROY THE ENEMY. THEN SALVAGE THE REPAIRABLE 'MECHS AND USE THEM TO BOLSTER YOUR FUTURE ATTACKS. STAY FOCUSED ON YOUR STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE AND TACTICAL SKILLS THAT GUARANTEE A VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGN. AND REMEMBER, IF YOU CAN SHIFT THE BALANCE OF POWER AND CHANGE HISTORY, THEN YOU WILL TRULY BE A GREAT COMMANDER.



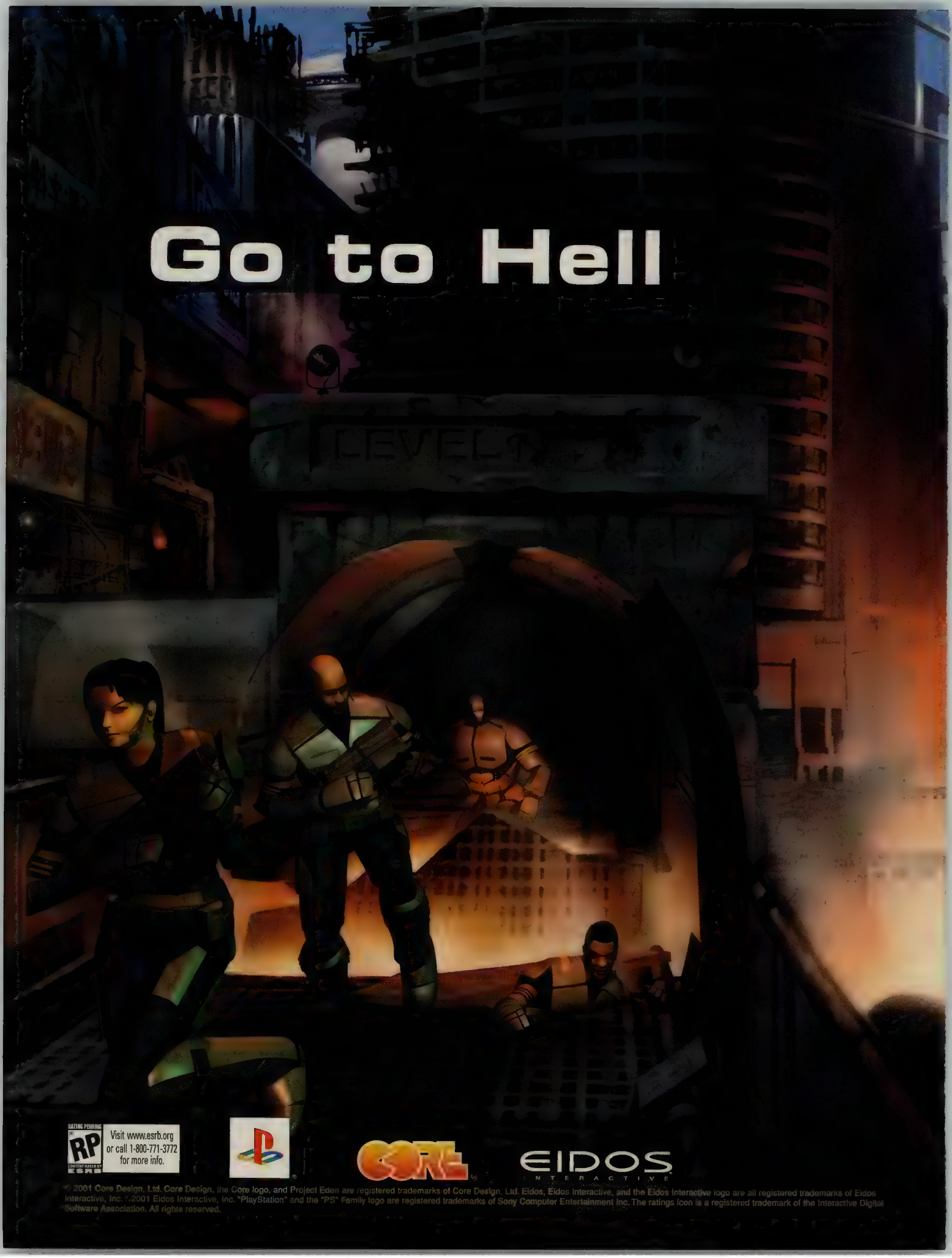
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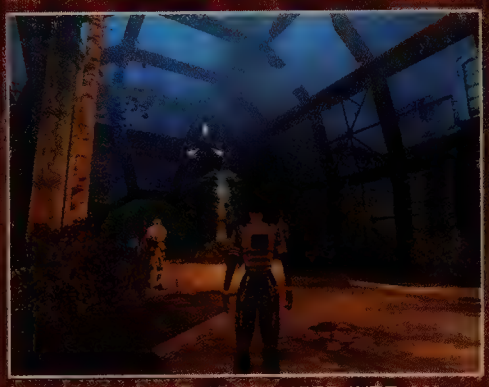
CORE

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

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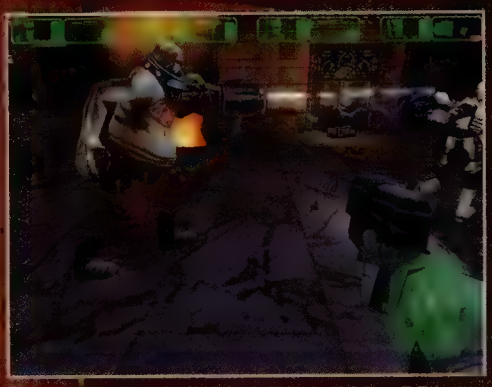
Due to severe overpopulation, the Earth's diameter is increasing with the growth of towering mega-cities. As civilization climbs high into the sky, it buries below its refuse: criminals, the wretched and the deranged. Now, amidst reports of violence and atrocity in lower levels, a service crew has disappeared without a trace.



Lead a team of specialists into an abyss of vast caverns, snake-like passageways and luring dead-ends.



Tread lightly. The depths belong to twisted cults, mutants and hideous creatures that were never meant to exist.



Play in single player mode, or with up to 4 others in multiplayer.

PROJECT EDEN

www.projectedengame.com

THE REST OF SHOW

BATTLE REALMS



We've been confident for some time that this ambitious real-time strategy game will be a cut above the rest. Finally, we have an RTS in which single combatants actually matter and martial-arts skills, not numbers, affect who wins battles. So cool. — *LK*

Liquid; Ubi Soft; Q3 '01

CONQUEST: FRONTIER WARS

Another refugee from Digital Anvil, this space-based RTS is being finalized by Fever Pitch studios. We weren't terribly impressed by its E3 showing, but the developers have some unique ideas — such as having AI admirals help you command your fleets — that could make this game worthwhile. — *LK*

Fever Pitch; Ubi Soft; Aug. '01

MEGARACE 3D

Lance Boyle is back — and you can take that as either a treat or a threat. Without another *Wipeout* game coming to the PC anytime soon, we'll just have to make do with this new sequel to the *MegaRace* 3D racing/shooter series. Obnoxious host Boyle may have few fans, but at least this game has 33 circuits and eight worlds to help block him out. — *CO*

Cryo; DreamCatcher; fall '01

GLOBAL OPERATIONS



The flood of realistic first-person shooters is here, and if there's one that the online community is watching, it's *Global Ops*, a game from some of the people behind *Counter-Strike*. First impressions remind us of (surprise) *Counter-Strike* set in eerily authentic real-world locales, using the LithTech engine. — *LK*

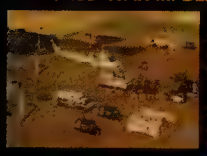
Barking Dog; Crave; Q3 '01

ZOO TYCOON

Think *RollerCoaster Tycoon* set in a zoo and you'll have a pretty good grasp of what this game is all about. Build appropriate habitats, keep your 40-odd animals in line, and ensure that your human visitors are happy and healthy to score points and win scenarios. It's a family game, so don't expect to see escaped lions mauling the kneebiters, but Tycoon-game fans should have plenty to chew on. — *CO*

Blue Fang; Microsoft; fall '01

WORLD WAR III: BLACK GOLD



Picture Simon & Schuster's *Real War* in 3D. It's all real-world units in a full-3D environment played in real time. *World War III* is one of JoWooD's most promising titles, and it's being developed by the makers of *Earth 2150* and *The Moon Project*. — *LK*

Zuxxex Ent.; JoWooD; '02

HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Though satirist Douglas Adams is no longer with us, his legacy lives on with a new interactive adaptation of his classic novel. As Arthur Dent, you'll run and jump through a third-person *Tomb Raider*-style adventure armed only with your trusty towel for protection. Not quite what we were expecting, but Digital Village promises that the book's quirky humor will make the jump as well. — *CO*

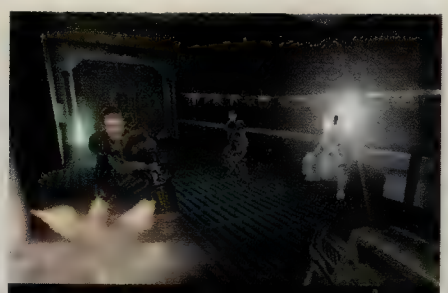
Digital Village; PAN Interactive; Q1 '02

BEAMBREAKERS



Picture *Gran Turismo* set in the airborne urban sprawl from *The Fifth Element*, and you have *BeamBreakers*. While participating in a series of illegal races for money, you'll have to dodge cops and save your dough for new cars and upgrades. With more than 500 cars onscreen at once, this is one game you've gotta see for yourself. — *LK*

Fishtank; Simitis; Q1 '02



In multiplayer *AvP2* games, you'll be able to play as different character classes for each race.



The Predator's initial weapons loadout has been reduced to boost play balance in multiplay.

ALIENS VS. PREDATOR 2

THIS GREAT LICENSE got a decent game in its first appearance: dripping with atmosphere, *AvP* was surpassed in the scary stakes only by the recent *Undying*. The new game runs LithTech's own engine, and as such the graphics have been stepped up a few notches. But the biggest improvement will be the large number of scripted events used to draw you into the story. In the marine mission we were able to play at E3, we came across many spots where packs of aliens would bust through grates and pound on doors, denting the metal, to get at us. When a colonial marine armored personnel carrier pulled into the level just in time to save our asses, we felt a palpable sense of relief.

Lighting and sound effects are as spooky as ever, with sputtering lamps and the familiar burp of your pulse rifle as you splatter an alien's guts all over the walls. One terrific touch is how the motion sensor will be able to trip you up: it'll pick up *everything*. Is that blip a tiny harmless bug or a facehugger?

The new, fleshed-out story takes place on a planet where Predators have placed droves of aliens for their hunting pleasure. Dumb humans decide to plop down a research facility, and havoc ensues. Marines will have AI squad support, aliens will run in packs, and Predators will have buddies along for the hunt. Throw in 16 types of playable creatures and characters (from facehuggers to different types of Predators) and a new, better-balanced multiplayer mode, and *AvP2* looks like a significant advance over the original. — *LK*

Monolith; Sierra; late '01

THRONE OF DARKNESS

LOOKING A LOT LIKE *DIABLO* set in feudal Japan (not so surprising considering that Click Entertainment's founders, Ben Haas and Doron Gartner, worked on the original *Diablo*), *ToD* is an isometrically viewed action/RPG in which slashing, hacking, and magic are the order of the day.

In his quest for immortality, a power-hungry warlord of ancient Yamato has unleashed a legion of demons upon the people, and now only you and your party of up to four samurai can stop him. There are 10 levels of gameplay plus dozens of side quests for you to fight through and over 30 types of mythological creatures standing in your way.

During our demo, we were treated to an amazing opening cinematic that can be described only as an animated graphic novel brought to life in 3D. Haas demonstrated the gameplay using a party composed of four out of seven available player types



We hate to say it, but "Game over, man...game over!"



It's a tough call, but *Medal of Honor: AA* wins the blue ribbon from me.



Our initial apathy to *Throne*'s oh-so-*Diablo* gameplay has given way to genuine enthusiasm after this recent demo of its inventive gameplay.

(Leader, Mage, Archer, Swordsman, Ninja, Brick, and Berserker) to rip through a dojo, killing demons and ransacking the place for gold, armor, weapons, and magic spells. And yes, there's a King of the Hill–style multiplayer campaign in which up to 35 players can play representing the four castles of the seven samurai, or battling for evil as minions of the Dark Warlord. — *CO*

Click; Sierra; summer '01

SOVEREIGN

EVEN AT E3, IT'S RARE to find a company with a game design that no one else has attempted before. One exception this year was Sony, which unveiled the new Mech-influenced styling of the world's premier massively multiplayer real-time strategy game.

Zoomed in, maps look like those in any other next-generation 3D RTS, with units rumbling over hills, emitting terrific particle effects, and finding their path to an objective. Zoom out, however, and you'll see that the map is actually a rendered spherical planet that you can spin and explore. You can't see enemies outside your line of sight, but fog of war doesn't keep you from getting a lay of the land. Planets vary in size, ranging from small homeworlds to vast globes supporting 500 warring armies.

When you first log in, you'll be given a homeworld, a planet with limited resources on which no battles can take place. This is where you build your technology tree and train your army. It will take days — real days — to finish building or researching one piece of technology. Thankfully, production continues when you're logged off, but it will still take years to max out your technology tree. While this time setup may seem restrictive, Sony is betting that it will force players to focus on specific skill sets and work together with their guild to win battles.

Guilds consist of 50 to 100 players, all working for a common goal. In turn, several guilds make up a "great house," and it's the war between these houses that drives the action in the persistent universe. Interestingly, not only are the houses at odds, but there is a constant struggle between the guilds to rule their house. And while you can defect to another guild whenever you like, any backstabbing that you commit will be written in a log that house leaders can read before admitting you. Take that, traitorous types.

Sound complicated? Well, apparently designing a massively multiplayer RTS is, but the depth it creates is certainly appealing. — *JW*

Verant; SOE; summer '02



A major makeover into a Mech-inspired future has kickstarted *Sovereign*'s interest level.



From this angle it's a standard RTS, but *Sovereign*'s huge online depth gives it an edge.

MOTOR CITY ONLINE

GET READY TO RACE FOR PINK slips. *Motor City Online* has been a long time in the making, but it's probably the most original of the massively multiplayer online games in development. It's an online world in which you join car clubs racing classic American roadsters for money, pooling resources to improve your fleets, and even racing head-on for pink slips.

Expect over 20 licensed cars, from the common (a '57 Chevy) to the super-rare (a Shelby Cobra, which will be added sparingly to the game world one at a time). The physics model is surprisingly high-fidelity, but relatively easy to learn. After a few races, you should be competitive; the style allows for oval-track racing as well as head-to-head street drag racing.

Most intriguingly, EA is looking to create and nurture a vibrant online community for the game. A Motor City newsletter will keep you up to date on the latest world happenings, and you'll be able to get a job as a reporter on the gazette, taking screenshots as "photographs" and writing your own reports from the races.

Auctions will be a huge part of the game world's commerce, incorporating elements of eBay in the buying, selling, and trading of cars and parts. Modifying stock cars will be a big part of the fun for gearhead enthusiasts.

Everyone likes a good car race. But when you add in the clique-ish feel of the game's persistent online car community, *Motor City Online* could be a place for racing fans to spend tons of time. This original interpretation of the massively multiplayer mantra is something we'll be tracking closely. — *DM*

EA.com; EA; fall '01

VIRTUAL BRITNEY

YOU PROBABLY THINK that this is a lame excuse for us to get a picture of Britney Spears in the magazine — whatever — but that doesn't mean this technology didn't hold our attention as long as her adorable, er, face.



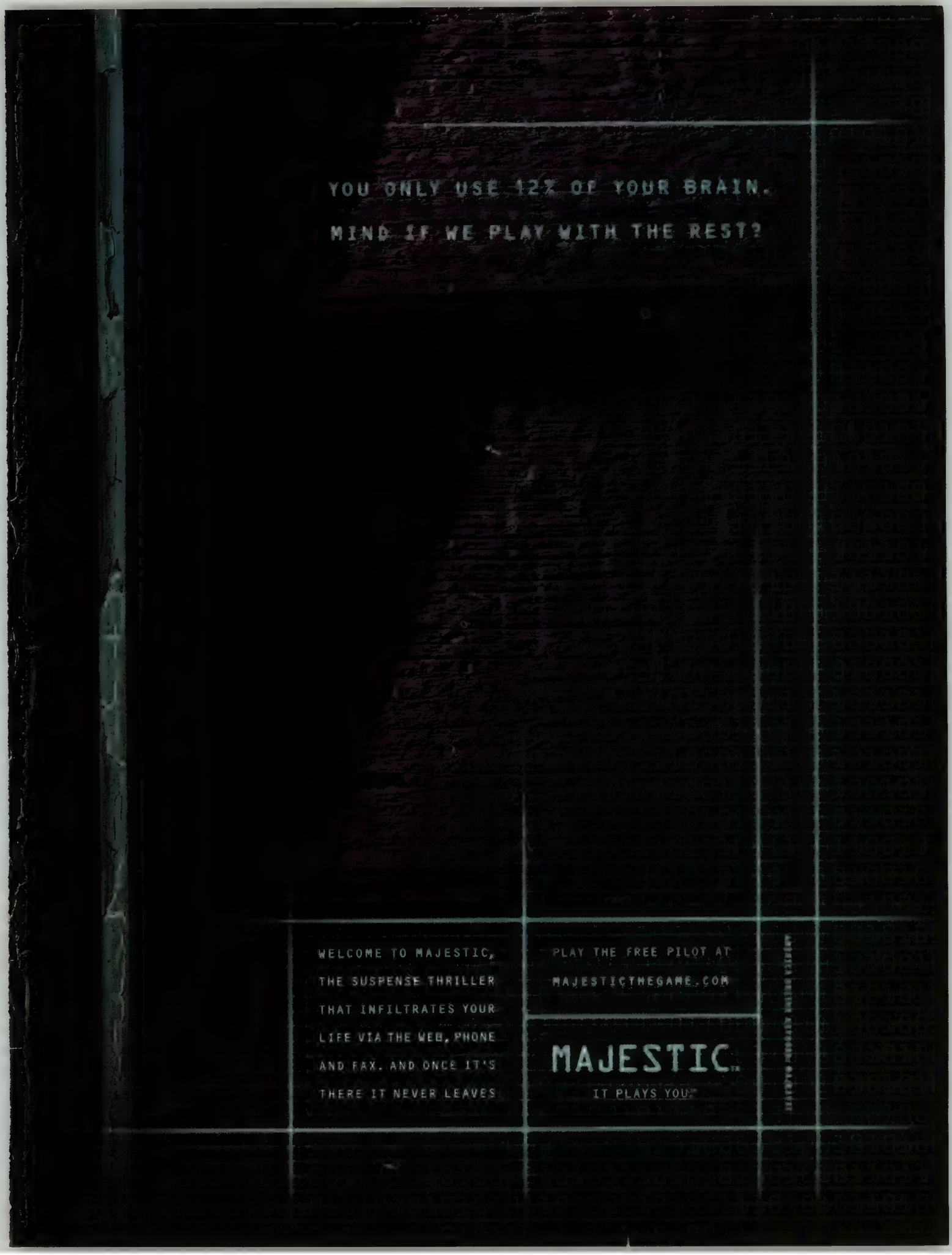
Basically, this tech is a lot like Apple's familiar QuickTime VR, only instead of moving the camera to look around a still image, you're moving around a 360-degree motion video. You can zoom in and out, look up and down, and spin the camera in any direction.

But what about Britney?! Well, Enroute has teamed with her to produce an as-yet-untitled DVD of concert footage using its FirstPerson Immersive Video. The camera is set at the foot of the stage, and you'll feel like you're watching the concert from the front row, minus the pushers behind you and various wafting narcotic substances. Enroute also promises that a game will be included that sets you in search of icons revealing prizes and secret areas. To be honest, the zoom function didn't go as close as we'd have preferred, but we have to admit the tech is pretty neat. — *JW*

Enroute Imaging; TBA

PC GAMER THE CONSENSUS: On a battlefield filled with strong soldiers, *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* led the charge. It was truly Best of Show.


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Many Korean *Lineage* fans play the game in LAN gaming rooms, where they pay by the hour. Posters such as this one are plastered all over these rooms to promote the game.

THUS SAYETH THE LORD



Richard "Lord British" Garriott is back in business with some pals from the gaming hotspot of Korea...

Far away from the noise and hubbub of the larger E3 halls, the staff of *PC Gamer* sat in a cramped room with Richard Garriott. It was surreal as the accomplished Game God, known to many as Lord British, told us about how his new company, Destination Games, would take the United States by storm with the help of a Korean gaming giant known as NC Soft.

PC Gamer: Start from the beginning and tell us what's happened since you left Origin.

Richard Garriott: A year ago, I retired from Origin. At that exact same time, I registered the domain Destination Games. I joined forces with my brother Robert; we were the co-founders of Origin. We decided that the online marketplace was the right place to start a new business. Our initial plans were to actually start quite slowly, just acquiring a team member or two over a long period of time, funding this whole activity ourselves out of our own pockets. Then suddenly, graciously, Electronic Arts basically laid off the entirety of Origin. Suddenly, what we thought would be a small, slow program evolved into a rapid-expansion program. Of the 85 or so Origin people laid off, we quickly brought onboard about 50 — basically the cream of the crop. Now all we needed was funding. That's when Jake Song from NC Soft [chief creative officer and creator of *Lineage*] came along.

PCG: How did you guys find each other?
RG: He found us through the web about six weeks ago. We met, conducted discussions, and realized that each of us had exactly what the other needed to not only make *Lineage* a great worldwide success, but also to make sure that the next game developed by what is now *our* companies is a true worldwide hit from its launch.

PCG: So what *is Lineage*?
RG: Jake Song has created the best *Ultima*-style game ever. The subtitle is *The Blood Pledge*, and it's what we think is the best part of the game. It's basically a more permanent version of a party. You can't break a blood pledge. *Lineage* was designed specifically around massive team-on-team battles. The servers handle that load extremely well. It's an incredible thing to participate in.

PCG: How successful has *Lineage* been in Korea?
RG: The biggest online RPG isn't *EverQuest*, *Ultima Online*, or *Asheron's Call*: It's actually *Lineage*, which has 2 million active accounts and 180,000 simultaneous players in only two territories (Korea and Taiwan). It's bigger in those two regions than all the MMRPGs in America combined. NC Soft has an incredible success story that's largely unheard of outside of their territories.

PCG: What involvement does Destination Games have with *Lineage* in this country?
RG: Complete involvement. Before yesterday, NC Soft had five employees in the U.S. Now they have 55. About 25 of those are working on the new game, which we're calling *Tabula Rasa*, and the other 25 are supporting *Lineage*.

PCG: Foreign games often have a difficult time penetrating the U.S. market. How do you plan to get American gamers interested in *Lineage*?
RG: I'm the owner of the Lord British trademark. When I left Origin, Lord British left Origin. Starr [Long, producer on *UO* and *UO2*] had already written the fiction describing Lord British's departure from *Ultima*, and his goal of going out and exploring new worlds. Well, guess what world he's going to explore first? *Lineage*. In fact, Jake's art staff back in Korea has already started working on the renders and things for Lord British to enter there. We'll also contact a lot of the major guilds in the online roleplaying world and invite them to come with us and go take over some castles here in *Lineage*.

PCG: How do you get *Lineage*?
RG: Download, magazine covers. NC Soft's business model is the same as Destination Games' retail model. We have no intention of ever shipping a retail product. We don't want to encumber people with the necessity of going to a retail store and buying the product before they can start playing it. With *Lineage*, instead of doing patching, they would hold up their new features for months at a time and release them with a new episode. These episodes would come with a variety of new features and usually some new creative story content.

PCG: Does it feel good to get back to your roots in a way?
RG: Oh yeah — I couldn't imagine a more exciting re-entry into the industry. Honestly, when I left Origin a year ago, it was very painful and difficult. And I wasn't sure, frankly, if I ever wanted to get back into this industry. And suddenly in the last two months me and Starr found each other, and then me and Jake Song found each other, and we thought, Oh my gosh, what an incredible opportunity! NC Soft has a half-billion-dollar company. It's exciting not only from a creative standpoint, but from a business standpoint as well.

PCG: Why have you decided to limit yourself to online multiplayer games?
RG: This is the future of gaming. The packaged-goods business is old and dying as far as I'm concerned. We are now the best-positioned company going forward to exploit the online market. All the "Dot Bombs" showed you how good the advertising-supported, multimillion-member mass-market games are. So we'll let those companies have as many free members as they want and lose money per subscriber forever. In the meantime, we'll take the rapidly growing hardcore business and make millions of dollars.

PCG: How do you feel about the future of the single-player game experience?
RG: I think single-player games as a play experience still have a very good future. For our part, we plan to integrate the best aspects of single-player games and the best aspects of massively multiplayer games in our next games.

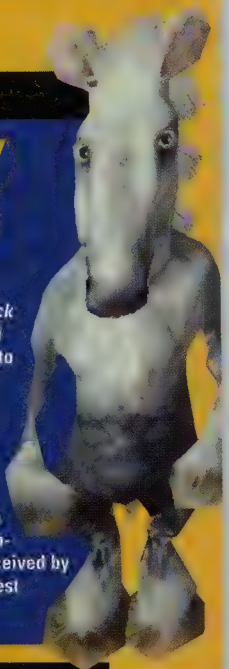
PCG: So what's in store for the future of NC Soft and Destination Games?
RG: If you're trying to create the next great online game, what better opportunity than to combine the most experienced online-game developer in history [Starr Long]; the person who was not only his partner, but who created one of the longest-known properties from the history of gaming (and *UO*, the first, most successful online game of its time) [Richard Garriott]; and the person who has created the best online game bar none, that's better and bigger than all online games combined [Jake Song]. Add those talents together, and there's a pretty good chance this group will succeed in creating the world's next greatest online game.



One of *Lineage*'s greatest strengths is its ability to support massive battles.

A PCG CONTEST

WIN A COPY OF BLACK & WHITE!



We've snagged five copies of *Black & White* to give away — but you'll have to earn them. Send an email to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with "Black & White" in the subject heading and tell us whether you would be a good god or an evil god if you were a winner, and why. We'll pick the five most worthy deities-in-waiting to win a free copy of Peter Molyneux's stunning game. All entries must be received by Aug. 30, 2001. See additional contest rules on page 33.

NOW AND THEN

The Top-Selling Games Today...

Rank	Game and Publisher	PCG Rating
1	Myst III: Exile Ubi Soft	85%
2	The Sims House Party Electronic Arts	73%
3	Black & White Electronic Arts	95%
4	The Sims Electronic Arts	96%
5	Myst III: Collectors Ed. Ubi Soft	N/A
6	Tropico G.O.D.	77%
7	The Sims Livin' Large Electronic Arts	85%
8	RollerCoaster Tycoon Infogrames	89%
9	Age of Empires II Microsoft	94%
10	Tribes 2 Vivendi	89%

SOURCE: THE NPD GROUP • STATS ARE FOR MAY 6–12, 2001

...And This Time Five Years Ago

Rank	Game and Publisher	PCG Rating
1	Duke Nukem 3D GT Interactive	93%
2	WarCraft II: The Dark Portal Blizzard	N/A
3	WarCraft II Blizzard	96%
4	Civilization II MicroProse	97%
5	Myst The Learning Company	95%

SOURCE: THE NPD GROUP • STATS ARE FOR MAY 1996

THE PCG NEWS TICKER

Aiming to become a major player in the PC games market, Ubi Soft has nabbed the rights to publish a slew of games, including *Battle Realms*, *Loose Cannon*, *Conquest*, and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

A TV show based on the BattleTech license is in the works. *Star Trek* writer D.C. Fontana will be onboard, as will Foundation Imaging, a company that did special effects for *Babylon 5* and *Voyager*.

CDV, the company that published *Sudden Strike* and *Cossacks*, will be releasing a game called *Escape from Alcatraz* this October. As the title suggests, you play an inmate who must escape from The Rock.

LucasArts is bringing the hit PlayStation 2 game *Star Wars: Starfighter* to the PC. The flight/action game takes place during the *Episode I* timeline and will be a direct port of the PS2 version. Expect it this fall.

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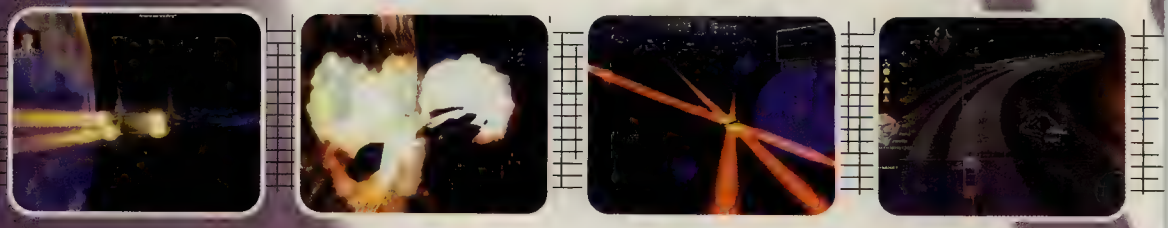
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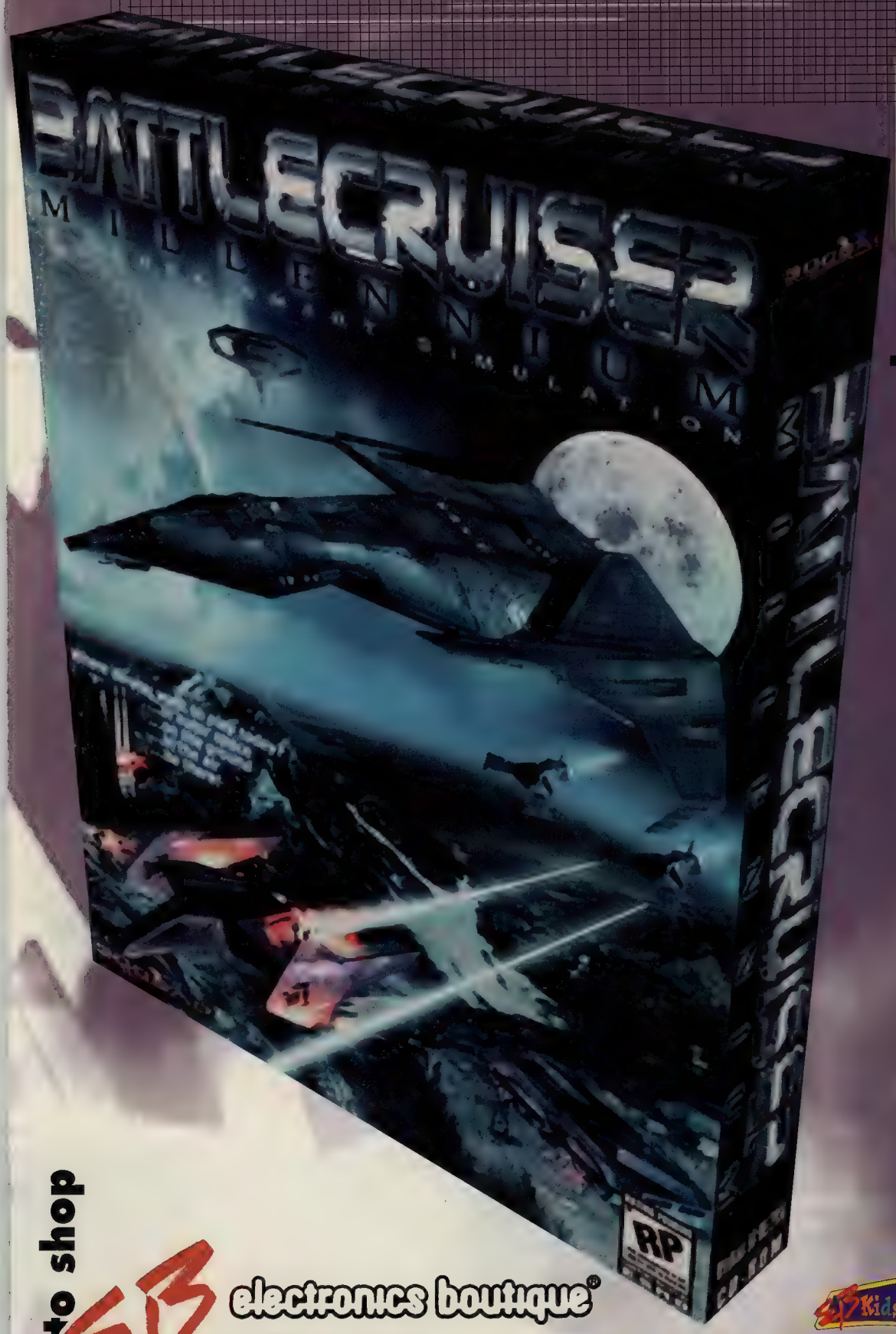


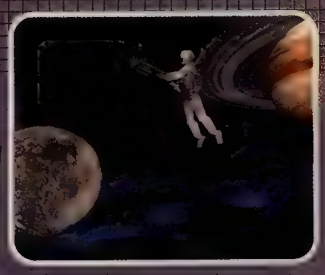
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EB Kids! EBX



The best FPS weapon ever, the original *Quake* rocket launcher, has returned!

BRING BACK THAT GOOD OL' QUAKE

Valve has a little present for *Quake* DM fans

You heard it here first: Valve, the developer that's still sitting tight-lipped on its *Team Fortress 2* project, is preparing a special release of a "fun" project that started as a reverential tribute to an id multiplayer masterpiece. This spare-time project has resulted in a release to the game community this summer. *Deathmatch Classic* (DMC) is Valve's re-creation of some of those amazing original *Quake* DM maps in a modified *Half-Life* engine. And it will be released *for free* as an add-on for *Half-Life* not long after you read this.

Now, some of you may be asking, "Why?" Gabe Newell, president of Valve, tells us: "We created *DMC* for our own entertainment. It really reminded us of just how kickass [*Quake*] was, and we thought it'd be a great reminder for everyone — and a tribute to id's accomplishments — if we finished it and released it. So we asked [id owner] John Carmack about it, and he gave us the go-ahead to do this, as we're a licensee of id technology."

Will any *Quake* goodness be lost in the translation? Not if Valve can help it: the developer assures us that keeping the game's physics the same is a high priority. The sound effects will be new, but they'll be inspired by the original sounds and should have a suitably nostalgic effect. Five maps will be available at launch, inspired by the *Quake* deathmatch maps DM2, DM3, DM4, DM6, and E1M2.

Since this project was developed "for our own interest, and in our spare time," according to a Valve insider, it didn't have a specific team and has not impacted the continually evolving release date of the hotly anticipated *Team Fortress 2*. We can't wait to re-create those grand days…



WAITING IS THE HARDEST PART

Where the hell did all the *Fallen Age* votes go? *Shadowbane* once again takes the No. 1 spot. Don't like these results? Email your vote to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with "Waiting Is the Hardest Part" in the subject heading, and let us know what game you just can't wait for. One lucky gamer will win a free game. This month's winner is Yang Hai, who voted for *Team Fortress 2*. Your prize is on the way, Yang!



THE TOP FIVE

1. Shadowbane
2. Max Payne
3. Star Wars Galaxies
4. Duke Nukem Forever
5. Halo

CONTEST RULES No purchase is necessary. Only one entry per household, per month, will be counted. Anyone can vote, but only United States residents are eligible to win prizes, and the offer is void in FL, RI, Puerto Rico, and where prohibited by law. Your chances of winning depend on the number of entries we receive. Failure to follow the rules will result in instant disqualification.

THE PCG NEWS TICKER

The standalone mission pack for *Starfleet Command II, Orion Pirates*, is due any day now. It features a new 12-mission campaign, 26 new skirmish missions, bonus missions based on *Star Trek* episodes, and new weapons.

Sierra has confirmed that work is already underway on an add-on to *Tribes 2* from Dynamix. Little has been finalized so far and the release date is TBD, but it's safe to expect the usual mix of new vehicles, maps, and missions.

Interplay is planning to release a totally free, downloadable add-on for the *Icewind Dale: Heart of Winter* expansion pack. It'll have two new areas to explore, at least 20 new magical items, new monsters, and more.

We'd like to offer our condolences to the family and friends of Douglas Wayne Myres, Jr., who passed away May 3, 2001. Myres was the VP of New Media at Gathering of Developers. He'll be sorely missed.

THE PCG PLAYLIST

Having seen heaps of incredibly promising games at this year's E3, we came back to a bunch more goodness laying on our disc-covered desks. From beta builds of *Diablo II: Lord of Destruction* and *Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal* to final copies of *Echelon*, *Elite Force Expansion Pack*, and *Half-Life: Blue Shift*, we've had plenty to keep us gaming happily. And this is considered the slow time of year for games!



ROB Most of my play time was spent trekking through a beta of the *Diablo II* add-on again. And my *Championship Manager* addiction is getting out of hand. What'll finally kill it is when any of the incredible games on display at E3 finally show up. From *Max Payne* to *Neverwinter Nights* to the new *Star Wars* games, it's a great time to be a PC gamer.



COREY Ah, the *Elite Force* add-on at last...bless you, Raven. Though my tour of starship *Voyager* was short, and the crewmen wouldn't talk to me, the multiplayer 'bot bouts are great stuff. Also, in preparation for *Spider-Man*'s higher-res PC debut, I've been playing the game's Dreamcast version. Now let's see the *real* thing!



DAN I spent the month mowing down wave after wave of American soldiers as a Nazi sniper in *Day of Defeat*. If you were playing as an American last month, and were one of the thousands of doughboys capped in the head by PCG_Fritz, all I can say is "Deutschland, Deutschland, Uber Alles." *[Bastard. — Ed.]*



CHUCK One perk of being with *PCG* is getting to see the most talked-about games before anyone else. That's why at this year's E3, I decided to make like Dorothy and hang with the little folk, taking in games that don't have multimillion-dollar promotion budgets. Now I'm anxiously awaiting *Imperium Galactica III*, *Arx Fatalis*, and *Iron Storm*.



LI Surprisingly, I've gone back to my old favorites, *Firearms* and *Rogue Spear*. I also managed to snag an advanced copy of *Red Faction* for the PS2, and let's just reiterate that first-person shooters are no good on consoles. And yes, I've played *GoldenEye*. It's nothing compared to the best FPSs on the PC.



JEREMY One of the perks of being the CD Editor is hiding nude pictures of myself on every disc. Another is trying games I otherwise wouldn't install. It may be the gray hairs talking, but this *Quake* fiend has recently been addicted to the *Even More Contraptions* demo on this month's *PCG* CD. The confounding puzzles are deeply satisfying.



JOE Damn, I'm good at *Team Fortress Classic*: 103–12 sniping on the Well map in a 30-minute game (12-on-12). Chiaki and Corey think I need a new game. Nah, *TFC*'s all I need. Oh wait — Rob just dropped a beta of *Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal* on my desk. Honey, I won't be leaving my room for another two weeks...



CHIAKI "Juror #8 is wearing white shoes after labor day!" What a shameful travesty. Some people deserve to die — er, according to John Waters, anyway. The agonizing scream a man lets out after discovering a skewered boy is the same sound the Academy makes in *StarCraft*. Just one of the many lovely sound bites to be discovered in this game.



GREG Somehow, I was duped into driving Dan and Li down to L.A. for this year's E3. The six-hour drive is now just a big jumble of Cypress Hill rap songs, Jack in the Box Triple Ultimate Cheeseburgers, scary scenery, *Simpsons* debates, and Li snoring very loudly in the back seat. Can't wait for next year!

DESIGN LAB



We present to you our first pick for the new Design Lab contest. Its creator is now eligible to be our grand-prize winner, with the incredible bounty still in the planning stages before it can be officially announced. All entries must be sent to *design@pcgamer.com* or via snail mail to PC Gamer Design Contest, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Remember, keep it at 350 words and make it good.

HEROES FOR HIRE

■ **By Nickolas Charles Marheine**

YOU ARE THE NEWEST ADDITION to the hero-management company called Heroes for Hire, which is funded by towns and cities paying to have your superheroes patrol their city streets. You start out assigned to a weak, first-time hero-in-the-making in a small town with a small criminal element. You have to help him train and market his image to the locals by getting journalists to give him good publicity, negotiating a cartoon based on his exploits, and selling action figures of his likeness. And you need to make sure he doesn't step outside the boundaries of the law, so as to keep good relations with the local police force. If you do well, your hero will begin to become more powerful and popular, but make sure he doesn't become too cocky, or he might get himself killed.

Eventually, you'll be reassigned to more powerful and/or problematic heroes, and eventually start managing hero teams. Making sure that all the heroes get along, and that they're all happy with the setup, are the strategic balances. But your heroes aren't the only ones who will grow. Eventually, each hero attracts a nemesis and starts fighting crime syndicates. It will be your job to get as much info on the heroes' enemies as possible, and to inform them when their nemeses break out of whatever jail or asylum they've been incarcerated in. And you, too, will gain promotions until you get to run the company and have to compete with other hero-management agencies. You will have many ways to deal with the competition, such as running mudslinging campaigns against opponent heroes, offering better pay packages to lure heroes to your company, and many underhanded ways to subvert the other companies.

THE PCG RELEASE METER

You won't find a better game lineup on any other system. Thanks to Rich LaPorte for compiling this list. Send all release-date news to *laporte@gonegold.com*. Get the latest release dates at *www.gonegold.com*.







	Title	Publisher	Date	Prognosis
JULY	Vietnam 2	Microsoft	07/04/01	Targeted
JULY	Dragonriders: Pern	Red Storm	07/12/01	Flying late
JULY	MechCommander 2	Microsoft	07/19/01	Around here
JULY	Settlers IV	Ubi Soft	07/20/01	Settling in
JULY	Motor City Online	EA	07/20/01	Green light
JULY	Anachronox	Eidos	07/30/01	Who knows?
JULY	Commandos 2	Eidos	07/30/01	Hopeful
JULY	Monopoly City	Hasbro	07/30/01	Maybe
AUGUST	Sudden Strike Forever	Strategy First	08/03/01	Shooting for
AUGUST	Duke Nukem: Endangered Species	G.O.D.	08/17/01	Maybe
AUGUST	Red Faction	THQ	08/17/01	Would be nice
AUGUST	Destroyer Command	GAME Studios	08/23/01	Probable
AUGUST	Silent Hunter II	GAME Studios	08/23/01	Likely
AUGUST	Desperados	Infogrames	08/24/01	June
AUGUST	Rune Gold	G.O.D.	08/24/01	Should be
AUGUST	Rails Across America	Strategy First	08/24/01	On track
AUGUST	Throne of Darkness	Sierra	08/28/01	Possible
AUGUST	Art of Magic	Bethesda	08/31/01	We'll see

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COVER STORY

AFTER THE [ION] STORM



Deus Ex 2 and *Thief III*: A blueprint on game and studio design

Warren Spector's Austin-based development house is starting anew, freed from the baggage associated with its Ion Storm heritage. Prominent members of Looking Glass' *Thief* team have joined the creators of *Deus Ex*, *PC Gamer*'s 2000 Game of the Year, to form the basis of a company focused on creating "interactive simulations." That's *Deus Ex 2* and *Thief III* to you and I.

Read on for an exclusive first look at what's in store for these sequels, plus a fascinating behind-the-scenes unveiling of a company that's going to change the way you think about games.

by Chuck Osborn

"I REALLY THINK WE'RE GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD."

—WARREN SPECTOR

Coming from anyone else — much less a guy who makes computer games for a living — that might sound like the sort of sleazy marketing hype we've come to expect in the games industry: a fleeting braggadocio more sizzle than steak. But this is Warren Spector. His name is just as often associated with words like "legendary" and "game god" as it is with the award-winning games for which he's best known, such as *Ultima Underworld*, *System Shock*, and *Deus Ex*.

And now that his development studio, the former Ion Storm–Austin (but not yet renamed — see sidebar at right), has escaped the dark clouds looming over the rest of Ion Storm in Dallas — taking *Deus Ex 2* and *Thief III* with it — he has no reason to posture for the media. He's not the sort of guy who'd allow the phrase "suck it down" to pass his lips, and he'll *definitely* never tell you that he, or one of his games, will "make you his bitch."

No, Warren Spector is the type of guy who'll casually mention that his company is going to change the world — and mean every word of it. And who's going to argue with Warren Spector?



Warren Spector showing off the *Deus Ex: Game of the Year Edition* box (top); with *Thief III* Project Director Randy Smith (middle); and discussing *Deus Ex 2*'s design with *DX2* Project Director Harvey Smith (bottom).

Storm Warning

"The parties didn't work," *Deus Ex 2* Project Director Harvey Smith half-jokes, pinpointing one of the main reasons behind the Ion Storm split. Though most people who've followed industry gossip (or had the misfortune of buying into the ill-fated *Daikatana* hype machine) may assume that Ion Storm–Austin was seeking to distance itself from the bad press coming out of its more flamboyant sibling, the players themselves say that the decision to part ways grew more out of a clash in corporate culture.

Harvey recounts the Christmas party from two years ago in which both offices gathered together on a yacht to celebrate the holidays, yet ended up doing very different things. While the Dallas crew partied heartily up on deck, the members of Ion Storm–Austin retired to the galley — to play board games.

Yes, board games. A tattered stack populates a corner of the studio's meeting room, and staff members regularly get together to play Dungeons & Dragons, Acquire, and German board games like Ohne Furcht Und Adel and Carcasonne at least once a week, or whenever the mood strikes them. In fact, Warren Spector got his start writing pen-and-paper games, scribing such fare as Marvel Super Heroes Adventure Gamebook #5 starring The Thing. ("I actually got to write the words 'It's clobberin' time!'" he grins.) The book's framed cover is just one of the many past successes that adorn the walls of his corner office.

"It became apparent that it was time to move on," Warren continues. "We had a way of doing things, we had a way of thinking, and we had a type of game we wanted. The Ion Storm–Dallas office was pretty heavily focused on that 'Dallas shooter community.' It just started feeling not like a family."

Warren took his concerns to Eidos, the owners of Ion Storm, and asked them to consider spinning Ion Storm–Austin off into its own studio. They didn't need much convincing.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Shakespeare once said, "That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet." Then again, ol' Will never had to deal with a bevy of lawyers well versed in copyright law.

Finding a new name for the former Ion Storm–Austin has been far more arduous than anything faced by the fictional JC Denton. The team suggested a total of 340 possible titles, ranging from the sublimely simple ("Intentional Entertainment") to the goofy ("Angry Robot") to the patently ridiculous ("Ass Monkey").

Five were selected and submitted to Eidos lawyers, including Liminal Space Designs (LSD for short — "sending people on strange trips" would be the tagline, jokes Warren Spector). All were rejected.

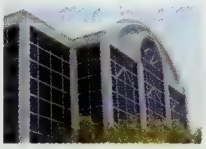
As we approached deadline for shipping this story, Liminal Games was in pole position. "[But] when I pitched Liminal Games to friends, colleagues, and Eidos execs at E3, well, let's just say the best response I got was derisive laughter," says Warren. With a few new possibilities in hand, Warren and his team are still waiting on the lawyers.

"I'm still hoping that we'll get the green light on Manifesto Games," he told us, right before our print deadline, "It says we stand for something, something we think is important, something revolutionary. And we actually *have* a studio manifesto, which makes it doubly cool. Finally, calling ourselves Manifesto means we can use 'Gamers of the world unite!' as our tag line. (OK, so maybe we won't do that...)"

The bottom line, as Warren puts it: "All the words are taken in this overly branded world of ours." The final name will be confirmed soon, at which point it's hoped that the business of making games can continue in earnest!

Studio-Building 101

At the time of our visit in mid-May, the soon-to-be-ex–Ion Storm–Austin is fresh off a move from downtown Austin's famed Sixth Street live-music strip into a more subdued office complex in north Austin. Currently, it employs a staff of 44, but is ramping up to hire another 30 by year's end. And if Warren (now playing the role of studio director) has his say, that's as large as the new company is likely to get.



"I've been down that road before," he explains, making reference to his old days at Origin, a developer that ballooned in size during its heyday. Intent on fostering his new company's tight-knit family atmosphere, he plans to keep headcount under a hundred.

While the process of hiring has been long and time-consuming, wiping out entire days of

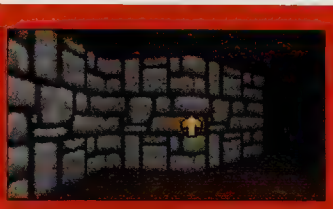


1990

Warren Spector produces *Wing Commander*, *Ultima VI* (left), and *Bad Blood* at Origin

1991

Warren writes documentation for *Wing Commander II: Vengeance of the Kilrathi*



1992

Warren produces RPGs *Ultima Underworld* and *Ultima: Worlds of Adventure II* (left)



Art Director Whitney Ayers and artist Den Johnson designing the futuristic look of *Deus Ex 2*.

valuable worktime for the project directors of *Deus Ex 2* and *Thief III*, the recent spate of layoffs at Austin-based Origin, Looking Glass, and Kinesoft has turned out to be an ironic blessing for Spector's new studio, allowing it to pick and choose from a pool of talented local game makers and, more importantly, friends.

Most of the company's employees have worked together before — if not on the first *Deus Ex* at Ion Storm, then on *Thief* or *Thief II* at Looking Glass or with Warren at Origin. If the games industry as a whole is considered to be a small sphere in which everybody knows everybody else, then the Austin development community is particularly incestuous. And Warren's new studio has taken advantage of that fact.

A tour of the office reveals the company's dedication to — well, dedication. Amid the aforementioned pile of board games and more *Star Wars* action figures than George Lucas himself could ever hope to own, the only hint of extravagance is found in the recreation/screening room. It's furnished with two pinball machines, an out-of-place Stairmaster, a hanging ceiling projector, and two of the biggest, most comfortable leather couches we've ever had the pleasure of sinking into. This is where the employees get together to watch movies, hang out, or discuss their games as a team.

If that sounds like a stark contrast to the high-rise opulence of that *other* Ion Storm, then it's by design. "I'm a fuddy-duddy," admits Warren. "All I do is think about and make games."

Changing the Gaming World

If you'd like to challenge yourself for a moment, try to categorize the genres of *Deus Ex* and *Thief*. Are they shooters? RPGs? How about Intelligent First-Person Stealth/Strategy Action/Adventure games? If this sounds like a meaningless exercise in frustration, then Warren agrees with you. "Categorizing games isn't our job," he says. "We make games."



A FIRST LOOK
DEUS EX 2



While *Deus Ex 2* (or *DX2* for short) had barely popped its head out of the pre-production stage when we visited The Company Formerly Known as Ion Storm–Austin, here's what we can tell you: It's set immediately after the conclusion of *Deus Ex* (although which ending it follows has yet to be revealed), you once again play as JC Denton, and it's powered by a heavily modified version of the *Unreal Warfare* engine.

More importantly, while the original programmers moved on after the completion of the first game, its design team remains intact. Harvey Smith, the lead designer from the first game, is *Deus Ex 2*'s project director, replacing Warren, who is now content to be "the guy running a game studio." Bill Money is also on the team as *DX2*'s associate producer. Three programmers were snatched up from the recently closed Looking Glass. And while the team is still hashing out *DX2*'s storyline and plot, *Deus Ex* writer Sheldon Pacotti is again penning the dialogue.



This time around, you'll have the option of playing as either man or woman, which, according to Harvey, was meant to be an option in the first game but had to be dropped to fit the game on one CD. Whether the female character will be an all-new persona or a gender-bending JC will be couched in the weaving plot twists we'd expect.

Graphics-wise, expect *DX2* to be a stunner. Harvey says that the *Unreal Warfare* code has been radically revised (mostly pertaining to lighting, physics, and AI) — even more so than the *Unreal* code used in *Deus Ex*. To prove it, he showed us a test map of Seattle rendered with the *DX2* engine. Whereas the original game could show a maximum of only 400 polygons onscreen at a time, *DX2*'s virtual Seattle wowed us with a whopping 40,000 polys. The Space Needle alone was 6,800 of them!

According to Harvey, the gameplay will remain true to the spirit of the original, letting you sneak, hack, or muscle your way to successfully completing a mission, and every object you see will be interactive. And lest you think that *DX2* will boldly take you where plenty of other games have taken you before, don't look for JC to visit parallel dimensions or outer space. "Our strength is Earth-bound conspiracies," says Harvey.



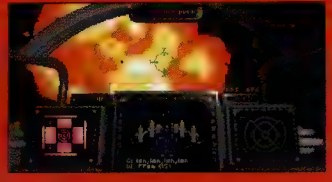
An exclusive first look at the *DX2* toilet. Remember, you saw it here first.



A sketch of the new military bot. In *DX2*, you'll be able to run between its legs.



Concept art for a temple belonging to *DX2* religious sect The Order.



1993

Warren produces the Origin classics *Privateer* (left), *Ultima VII*, and *Ultima Underworld II*. Bill Money is QA manager on *Links Pro* for the Mac



1994

Warren produces *Wings of Glory* and *System Shock* (left). Harvey Smith does QA on *System Shock* and is QA lead tester on *Ultima VIII: Pagan*'s CD release

THE CLASSICS LIVE ON



When the *Thief* series seemed to have come to an end (a touching eulogy about the games, and Looking Glass, was penned by Randy Smith and posted on a fan site), the fan community kicked into full swing. Websites such as Through the Looking Glass (*www.ttlg.com*) and Thief-TheCircle.com (*www.thief-thecircle.com*) have become gathering places for fans of these games to meet and download new levels, mods, and even fan-fiction.

Perhaps one of the most eagerly anticipated add-ons currently in the works is *The Circle of Stone and Shadow*. Produced by the folks at Through the Looking Glass, this expansion for *Thief II* will have a whole new campaign with brand-new levels and weapons. It also introduces a new story, a new main character, new adversaries (including the guards shown above), and more, and it looks incredibly well-polished.

For *Deus Ex* goodies, point your browser to *www.planetdeusex.com*. There you'll get everything from the *Cold Hearted* mod (featured in our February 2001 Extended Play column) to *DX Soccer*, a multiplayer soccer mod.

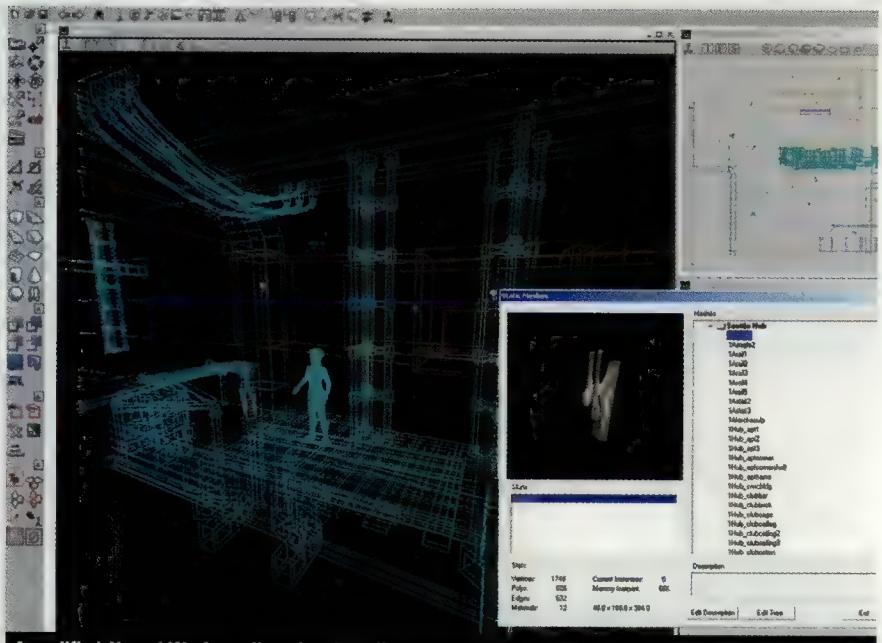
With the sheer volume of stuff available, there's something for everyone to keep these existing products alive and kicking. Thanks to legions of talented modders, the wait for *Thief III* and *Deus Ex 2* will be a little easier.

WHAT'S UP WITH ION STORM–DALLAS?

So Ion Storm–Austin starts anew. Where does that leave the Dallas studio? By the time you read this, its RPG *Anachronox* should be hitting shelves, and that could signal the end of the Ion Storm–Dallas office's stunningly high-profile, massively controversial, and ultimately disappointing life as a prominent game studio. Disappointing sales of the game will likely see the Ion-Dallas office reassess its future.

Should the office close, it is very possible that proprietors Tom Hall and John Romero will join with Stevie Case to be co-owners of a new game-development studio — an eventuality *PC Gamer* believes the parties have discussed. Should *Anachronox* turn out to be a stellar success, however, expect the obligatory sequel to come from the Dallas office.

Whatever the outcome, you can be sure the spotlight will be firmly fixed on these high-profile players.

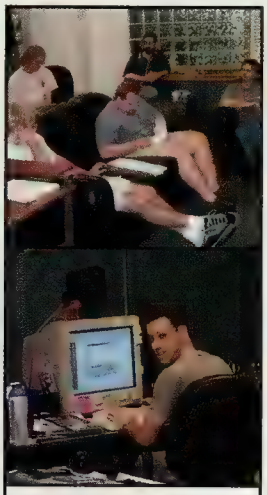


A modified *Unreal Warfare* editor showing off a custom tool — the mesh browser — in *Deus Ex 2*.

And the games they want to make don't fit any one genre. "We're figuring out the art of making an immersive sim," explains *Thief III* Project Director Randy Smith. "Immersive simulation" is an all-encompassing term for their games that means placing you inside the game world and letting *you* decide how to confront problems instead of trying to anticipate what the designer had in mind, and to win or lose based on your own accomplishments.

A pet peeve of Spector and his colleagues are games that use "forced failures" as part of their game design. Some prominent current games have committed this sin, such as the opening level of *Elite Force*, which advances the plot by forcing you to fail the mission even when you've done everything right; the unavoidable hexing of your creature in *Black & White*; or the first several levels of *No One Lives Forever*, where constant failure means plenty of harsh words from the boss and little motivation to continue. Or, ironically enough, one of the missions in *Deus Ex*.

"There are places where we don't let you effectively sneak your way through — you have to resort to guns," laments *Deus Ex 2*'s Harvey. "Unfortunately, we didn't intend that." (A discussion of *Deus Ex*'s flaws, and how the *DX2* team plans to confront them, will be in a future Inside Games installment.)



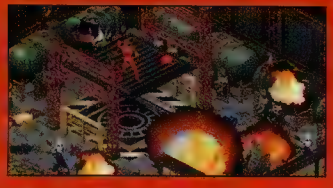
The designers of *Deus Ex 2* and *Thief III* get together often to hash out ideas and model their new shorts (top); "There goes the neighborhood!" Audio Director Alexander Brandon is surprised by *PC Gamer* editors.

Part of the design process of *DX2* and *Thief III* involves playing and tearing apart games, dissecting what worked and what didn't, so the designers can learn from others' mistakes — or from their own.

"If you ever go back and install the original *System Shock* and play it for a few minutes, it is insanely f—ked up in terms of interface complexity," says Randy, comparing it to the more streamlined interface in *Thief* and, ultimately, his plans for *Thief III*. Making games more intuitive and easier to play is one of the company's primary goals, even when gaming trends seem to be moving in the opposite direction.

"I stopped playing Squaresoft games. I don't even bother," admits Warren. "They are *so* complex. Leave sophistication out of it, leave story out of it. I look at the magic screens and how you have to put your sword together, and I can't deal with it."

If anything, the *DX2* and *Thief III* teams would like to make games more complex on



1995

Warren produces action games *CyberMage* and *Crusader: No Remorse* (left); Harvey writes and associate produces *CyberMage* and does QA on *Bioforge*; Bill writes documentation for Looking Glass' seminal flight sim *Flight Unlimited*

1996

Bill is project leader and designer of *Front Page Sports: Baseball* at Dynamix

1998

Randy Smith is a designer and Lulu Lamer is a playtester on *Thief: The Dark Project*

SPOTLIGHT REVIEW:

USER RATING

Speed	★★★★★
Connectivity	★★★★★
Ease of Use	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Support	★★★★★

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their end, not yours. One way to do this is to allow multiple solutions for every puzzle, leaving you to figure out what to do based on what a real person would do in the same situation.

The Needs of the Few

Even if most of the gaming world seems to be falling all over itself trying to get the next *EverQuest* or *Counter-Strike* out on the market, Spector and company are happy to focus on making a fantastic single-player experience. Neither *Thief* nor its sequel included a multiplayer game, and *Deus Ex*'s multiplayer component was added only after the game's release through a patch.

"You have to work your ass off to make a multiplayer game," says *Thief III* Associate Producer Lulu Lamer. "You can't just [add multiplayer support] in two months with two people."

"I don't want ever to overstate the sophistication and marvelousness of the *Deus Ex* multiplayer patch," Warren sheepishly notes. "We wanted to see if some of our gameplay choices could translate into multiplay, and I think we did a good job.

"As cool as it sounds to want to get six of your friends together to play a game, I think most of the people who did that were game developers. The joy of it is sitting around and yelling at the guy in the next office."

Adds Lulu: "*System Shock 2* is a perfect example: We [added multiplay] because of all the noisy critical demand for a multiplayer game — and we almost died implementing it. And 16 people played it."

The company estimates that since less than 50 people are playing *Deus Ex* multiplay at any one time, it doesn't make good business sense to spend months developing something that only a few players will enjoy. So, does that mean that *Thief III* and *Deus Ex 2* definitely won't have multiplayer support?

"Never say never," says Warren. "We're not ready to say we're not going to do it, but we have to make sure we do it right. If we make the big leap into multiplay, we're going to want to do it in a much bigger way."

And backed by a like-minded team of professionals ready to change the gaming world, we'd expect nothing less. After all — he's Warren Spector. PCG

PC Gamer will follow Warren's new company and its development of Deus Ex 2 *and* Thief III *in our next segment in a continuing series. Next up: We learn how the* DX2 *team plans to improve on the original, meet the rest of the teams, and play word association with Warren.*



A FIRST LOOK THIEF III

***Thief III* actually started [development] at Looking Glass," says Project Director and Lead Designer Randy Smith. After Looking Glass closed, the rights to *Thief III* were purchased by Eidos, which passed the project along to Ion Storm–Austin.**

Four ex–Looking Glass employees who had worked on both *Thief* and *Thief II* were immediately brought onboard to help finish the game: Randy, Associate Producer Lulu Lamer, Designer Emil Pagliarulo, and writer Terri Brosius. Now, the team is 14 strong, and though it's likely to grow in the coming months, there's no rush. "It's more important to find people who want to make the right kind of games" than to fill empty seats, explains Randy. "It takes a long time to interview people and make sure you've found the right ones."

Like *Deus Ex 2*, *Thief III* will use a modified version of the *Unreal Warfare* engine. In development for a total of six months, and just barely out of the pre-production stage, the project is still in its infancy. Though only a few concept sketches and a castle demo level were ready for preview in May, what we saw was not only impressive, but unmistakably true to the *Thief* heritage as well. Like its precursors, *Thief III* has a dark, foreboding ambience that makes hiding in the shadows easy for Garret, the game's titular thief/hero.



A mockup of a room from a *Thief III* level.

Besides better graphics, the new engine will also allow improved rendering capability, allowing each level to be larger than those in *Thief II*. Character AI will be vastly improved over the original games', with the *Thief* AI code being rebuilt from the bottom-up so that interactions with NPCs are more authentic than they were before.

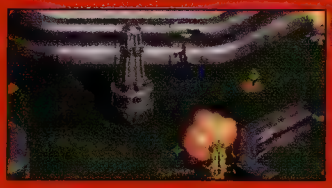
"On the design front, we're doing a lot of documentation right now," adds Randy, referring to the countless notes and drawings that the designers use to plan the game's action. "Like how you cycle through weapons, how you cycle through items, how you use things."

The team is close to completing *Thief III*'s intricate storyline and mission structure. While nothing about the sequel's plot has been set in stone, "We have a really solid plan that we feel comfortable with," says Randy.



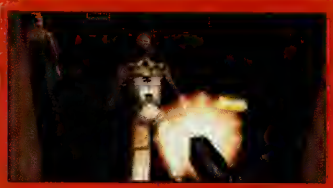


Concept art of the reclusive Pagans (top) and the secretive Keepers (bottom).



1999

Randy is a programmer and Lulu is QA lead on *System Shock 2*; Harvey is lead designer and Bill is producer of *FireTeam* (left) at Multitude



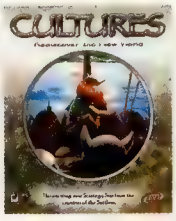
2000

Warren produces and Harvey is lead designer on *Deus Ex* (left); Randy designs and Lulu assistant produces *Thief II*; Bill produces/designs *Microsoft Casino*

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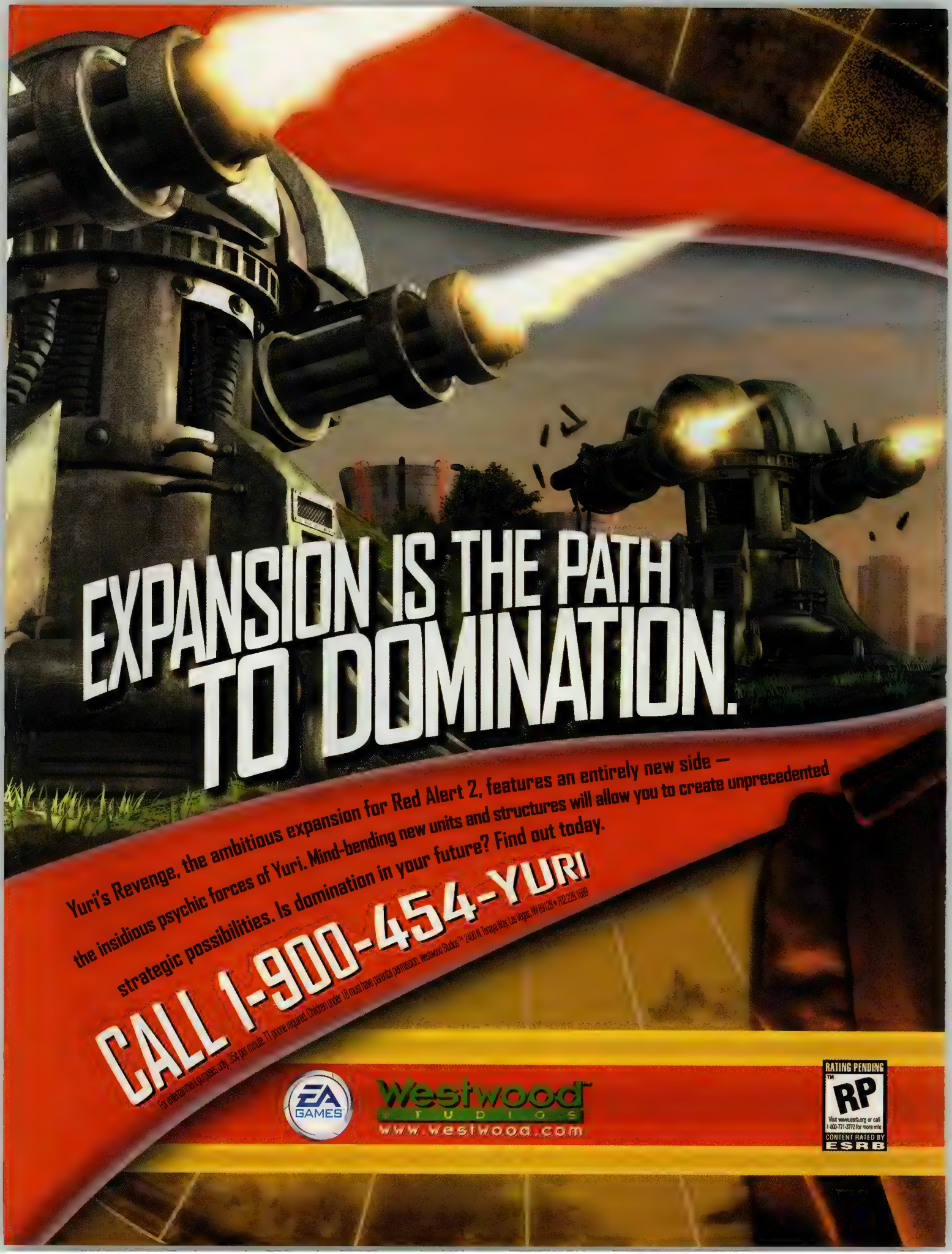
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STEEL BEASTS

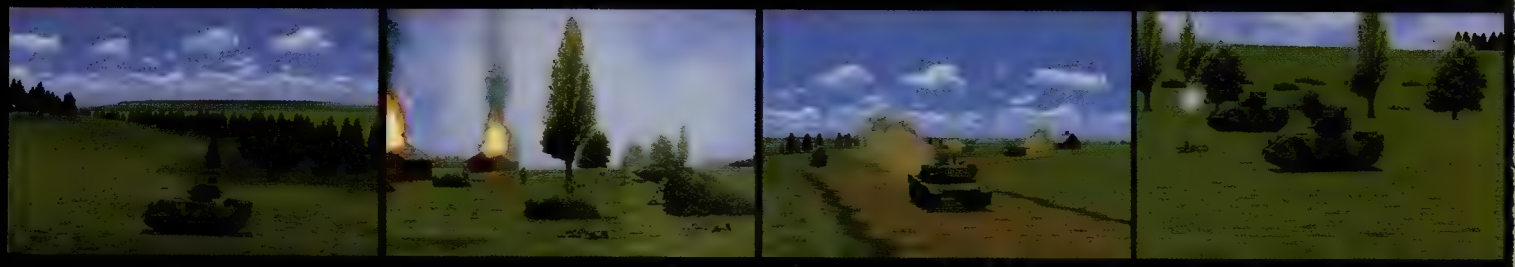
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E3 Road Trip 2001

Three of your humble *PC Gamer* editors are confirmed air-travel ninnies, and never fly anywhere if they can conceivably drive there. This includes the San Francisco–to-L.A. run for the great E3 gathering of games.

So it came to pass that Vederman, Kuo, and Morris piled into TheVede's Passat (known as the "Passat o' Love") and took to the highway for a good old-fashioned Road Trip. They brought along plenty of CDs, heaps of snack food, and plenty of time to kill — the other staffers called from Los Angeles Airport to announce they'd landed at just about the same time the driving trio was leaving the *PC Gamer* parking lot.

Ah, but what a road trip, with all the tradition's many joys. Gas stops in the desert heat. Bacon Triple Ultimate Cheeseburgers (available for a limited time only) at Jack in the Box. The nation's most awful public restrooms. And a rousing singalong rendition of Bon Jovi's "You Give Love a Bad Name."



Would you get in a car with these two?

But disaster finally befell the group as they headed northbound, home from the show. Normally, drivers on Interstate 5 fear the cattle-farm town of Coalinga, known for its endless fields of cows and their attendant stink. On the way down, the boys hadn't even noticed the place because they'd been smart enough to roll up the windows of the Passat and turn on the car's recirculation system.

Alas, they got sloppy on the drive home, and left the windows open in the scorching-hot day. When they came upon Coalinga, a terrible, terrible horribleness seized them. It was the stench of a million cows standing around in melting piles of their own manure. With screams of panic, the boys tried the recirculation again, but it was too late. For several minutes, the reek of Coalinga held them in a wince-inducing grip.

They couldn't wait to stop at the next Jack in the Box and enjoy a cheeseburger, just for the satisfaction of knowing some of those cows had died to produce them. Lousy Coalinga.

NEW AND IMPROVED RATING SYSTEM

Only the greatest games should be rewarded with our coveted Editors' Choice award, and this tweak to the rating system reflects that. Now, with a quick glance at the score box on each page, you can see where the game fits into the great gaming scheme of quality.

100%–90% EDITORS' CHOICE

We're battening down the hatches and limiting our coveted Editors' Choice award to games that score a 90% or higher. It's not easy to get here, and darn near impossible to get near 100%. Games in this range come with our unqualified recommendation, an unreserved must-buy score.

89%–80% EXCELLENT

These are excellent games. Anything that scores in this range is well worth your purchase, and is likely a great example of its genre. This is also a scoring range where we might reward specialist/niche games that are real breakthroughs in their own way.

79%–70% GOOD

These are pretty good games that we'd recommend to fans of the particular genre, though it's a safe bet you can probably find better options.

69%–60% ABOVE AVERAGE

Reasonable, above-average games. They might be worth buying, but they probably have a few significant flaws that limit their appeal.

59%–50% MERELY OKAY

Very ordinary games. They're not completely worthless, but there are likely numerous better places to spend your gaming dollar.

49%–40% TOLERABLE

Poor quality. Only a few slightly redeeming features keep these games from falling into the abyss of the next category.

39%–0% DON'T BOTHER

Just terrible. And the lower you go, the more worthless you get. Avoid these titles like the plague, and don't say we didn't warn you!

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS With each *PC Gamer* review in this issue, you'll find two very important pieces of information: the game's minimum hardware requirements and the hardware configurations we recommend as the *least* you'll need to really enjoy the game. While a game will run on the minimum system the manufacturer specifies, it might not run all that well. Because of this, we test each game on several systems so we can bring you a more realistic assessment of what you'll *really* need.

DON'T MISS...

We've been waiting to see what Westwood would do to make us forget *Red Alert 2*. Now it's here: a sweet RTS set amid a sci-fi classic.

EMPEROR: BATTLE FOR DUNE

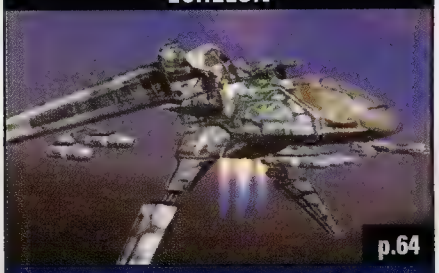


p.48

EDITORS' CHOICE

Here at *PC Gamer*, we honor the very best games we review with our Editors' Choice award. It's not easy to earn, and many excellent games fall just short of the honor. So when you see the *PCG* Editors' Choice logo on a game at a local software shop, you can bet it's among the best.

ECHELON



p.64

Check out the awesome screenshots for this visually astonishing space-combat game. And guess what? It's got more than looks.

WATERLOO: NAPOLEON'S LAST BATTLE



p.66

This may be about as good as a wargame gets. Return to the age of Napoleon for a colorful, in-depth strategy extravaganza.

CATEGORY	Real-time strategy	REQUIRED	PII 400, 64MB RAM, 700MB HD, 16MB 3D card
DEVELOPER	Westwood	WE RECOMMEND	PIII 800, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card
PUBLISHER	EA/Westwood	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	8

Emperor: Battle for Dune

Westwood's return to its RTS roots in glorious 3D turns out to be one of the hits of the year.



Dune is a harsh planet, and invasions will wreak havoc with your troops.



The Hawk Strike terrorizes all nearby enemy units, forcing them to retreat off the field of battle.

By most accounts, Westwood introduced the real-time strategy game in 1993 with *Dune II*. Now, some eight years later, the studio returns to the *Dune* universe with *Emperor: Battle for Dune*, which has the distinction of being the first true 3D RTS to come out of its hallowed halls.

And though the game's 3D graphics are indeed a sight to behold, if you peel back the beautiful eye-candy and peer inside, you'll find an entertaining game that gently nudges the genre forward without deviating too far from the proven gameplay formula that put Westwood on the map.

Set roughly 200 years before the 1984 film of Frank Herbert's perennial sci-fi series, *Emperor* finds the Known Universe in turmoil. The Emperor has died and the fate of the barren desert planet Arrakis (also known simply as Dune) hangs in the balance. Dune is home to the spice Melange, which extends human life, makes interstellar travel possible, and grants Future Sight to the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood.

Three powers step forward to claim Arrakis for themselves — House Atreides, House Harkonnen, and the obscure House Ordos. Also weighing in are five sub-houses, including the Emperor's elite force of Sardaukar, who find themselves directionless and increasingly more mercenary in their actions. In other words, they'll support the House that ponies up the most dough.

The game is broken into three separate campaigns, one for each House, and you can play the campaigns in any order. Each campaign has between 10 and 36 missions, depending on your actions over the course of the game. (Since there are 150 missions, the experience can be quite unique each time you play the game.) One feature introduced in *Emperor* is a strategic battlefield map. While the game still forces you to do specific missions from time to time, you generally get to choose where you want to fight next.

Each House has an established front at the beginning of each mission, and you can attack either of the two Houses from that front. Reinforcements, which show up during the course of a battle, are directly influenced by the size of your forces in surrounding areas, as monitored on the strategic map. (The same principle applies to the enemy as well — another strategic consideration you must weigh before launching an attack.) If you have an established base in the area, you can move that base to the front, thereby increasing your chances of a successful invasion.

As is the case in any conflict, various factions lurk on the sidelines waiting for their moment to enter the fray. In *Emperor*, influence over five sub-houses will help or hinder your efforts. If you ally with the nomadic Fremen, for example, you'll have access to units that can cross the desert floor without attracting sand worms, and their elite unit, the Fedaykin, can even summon a sand worm and then ride it into battle. The alliances you forge are primarily determined by the game, but you can capitalize on them by attacking territories where you have allies, thus bolstering your forces.

These alliances are a welcome addition to *Emperor*, but if you're not familiar with the *Dune* universe, you might be a little overwhelmed by the politics and not fully understand how they fit into the grand scheme of the war.

Beyond those new elements, the rest of *Emperor* follows the classic Westwood RTS model — you build your base, collect resources, and engage the enemy. The interface is a more streamlined version of the tab system



Nothing's worse than a case of the (sand) worms.



Emperor's 3D engine is quite impressive, especially when it comes to showing instances of mass destruction.



Some units refuse to fight, no matter how often you select them and click on a target. Lazy bums!



The interface is easy to use and navigate, and will be familiar to *Red Alert 2* players.

that was introduced in *Red Alert 2*, and is easy to use and navigate. You can queue up units, upgrade buildings (which will open up new construction options), and set waypoints with just a click of the mouse.

Following another tried-and-true Westwood tradition, the game's story unfolds via FMV cut-scenes that blend live action with CG backdrops. Michael Dorn makes an appearance as Atreides' Duke Achillus, and the acting and production values are top-notch throughout. The story itself is pretty standard fare, but it offers a few surprising moments, such as when the one major House is split in two and you must pick a side. Unfortunately, the final mission for all three sides is exactly the same, which is rather disappointing.

The units for each House are well designed and nicely balanced. My only real complaint is with the super-weapons, which, with the exception of the Atreides Hawk Strike, really aren't that super. I understand that there are game-balance considerations, but if a group of people can travel all over the universe, surely they can create a *real* super-weapon. C'mon, Westwood, let me nuke 'em back to the Stone Age!

In what could be a first in the annals of computer gaming, the AI in *Emperor* suffers from multiple personalities. At times it'll act perfectly — enemy units will target your repair unit first and then go after your military units, and they'll rush through your defenses and go straight for your buildings. Yet, at other times, enemy units will simply sit there, refusing to fire, and units will bump into each other and get stuck.

The worst offender is the harvester. For whatever reason, Westwood just can't create a harvesting unit that acts sensibly. Carryalls transport harvesters out to the spice, but they'll drop them right on enemy units, refuse to pick them up when they're under attack (or pick them up and set them right back down), and then get confused and simply circle endlessly while there are harvesters that need to be picked up.

The two multiplayer modes consist of the standard free-for-all and a new co-op mode in which you play through the single-player game with another person. Over 30 maps are available for multiplayer combat, but because of the 3D engine, there's no random map generator.

Multiplay is great fun, especially since each player can ally with two of the sub-houses and access their specialized weaponry. These alliances add more depth to the combat and force you to alter your strategies based on who you're fighting and who they're aligned with. If you can't find any humans to fight against (or are too big of a wuss to play online over Westwood's servers), you can always play an instant skirmish game against the computer.

Real-time strategy games and 3D graphics have never gotten along very well, but *Emperor* manages to create a smooth marriage between the two. The 3D aspects of the game never get in the way of the action (like they did in *Dark Reign 2*), the camera is simple to use, you can zoom all the way out for the bird's-eye view of the action, and the graphics are great, especially at higher resolutions.

That beauty comes with a price, however. On my Thunderbird 1.33GHz with a GeForce2, the game ran perfectly at 1024x768, but on my PIII 450 with a TNT2, *Emperor* slowed to a crawl during large battles, even at lower resolutions. Unless you have a totally dialed gaming rig, don't expect to view the action in all its glory.

Despite its high system requirements, *Emperor*'s combination of proven Westwood gameplay and new additions like the dynamic battlefield make this game a winner. If you're jonesing for some great RTS gaming, you can't do much better than this.

— William Harms

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Great graphics; strategic map and alliances add depth; classic gameplay still kicks ass.

LOWS: Steep system specs; AI is a little sloppy; *Dune* universe might overwhelm the uninitiated.

BOTTOM LINE: Evolutionary gameplay advances and classic Westwood combat mean must-have RTS.

PC GAMER EXCELLENT 89%

If you're not twisted you will be
NICE UVULA, DUDE.
IMAGINEERING
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB


before you build it,
after you ride it.
Ultimate Ride
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CATEGORY	Action	REQUIRED	P233, 32MB RAM, 150MB HD
DEVELOPER	Gearbox	WE RECOMMEND	PII 400, 64MB RAM, OpenGL-compliant video card
PUBLISHER	Sierra	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	32

Half-Life: Blue Shift

Gearbox's latest *Half-Life* expansion lasts as long as a scientist in a room full of those damn headcrabs.



The Pride. The Commitment. The horrible screaming as you watch a room full of co-workers get slaughtered by bullsquid. It's all waiting for you at Black Mesa!

As we all know, *Half-Life* and its descendants have set the standard for online and off-line FPS excellence for the last *two years*. This obviously provides Sierra with good incentive to keep re-re-re-releasing the game in various forms, ripping out different chunks of it and pushing them as standalone products. *Blue Shift* began life as a bonus episode for *Half-Life* on the Dreamcast; now it's here as a full-priced retail product for PC.

It puts you in the combat vest of Barney Calhoun, one of the beer-swiggin', pay-check-lovin' grunts who protects the nerdy denizens of the Black Mesa Research Base from certain death. Remember the schlep pounding on the door during *Half-Life*'s opening tram ride? Uh-huh. That's *you*.

Blue Shift follows the *Half-Life* formula to a tee. The map flow is supernaturally polished, and is unquestionably as good — if not better — than Valve's original work. Puzzles are well-thought-out and evenly spaced among the carnage, there's a quick side-trip to the scenic Border World of Xen, and those damn headcrabs are *still* scary. Intensively scripted sequences abound, and you're treated to lengthy conversations that give more clues as to the nature of "The Incident" in the Anomalous Materials laboratory.

As we saw in Adrian Shepherd's shoes in *Half-Life: Opposing Force* (also developed by Gearbox), there are several instances where Barney treads the same path as *Half-Life* protagonist Gordon Freeman. The designers have made one or two small, console-centric tweaks: small boxes automatically break when you jump on them (shades of *Super Mario*?) and crouch-jumping is automatic.

Blue Shift also hooks you up with a graphical facelift: You can opt to install the "High-Definition Pack," which replaces the monsters, NPCs, and weapon models with brand-new, high-polygon versions. This switch also works on previously installed copies of *Half-Life* and *Opposing Force*, so now you can play the old stuff with pretty new graphics.



Every detail from the aliens to your weapons gets a graphical makeover thanks to the High-Definition Pack.

But *Blue Shift*'s biggest sin in addition to its lack of new monsters is that it's *unbelievably* short. I was able to blast my way through in a paltry *two-and-a-half hours*. That's simply unacceptable. Since *Blue Shift* alone wouldn't be worth the abnormally high price of $34.95, Sierra opted to include the excellent *Opposing Force* expansion pack on the disc, and make the whole thing a standalone product — meaning you don't need a copy of *Half-Life* to play it. This strikes me as a bit odd. You'd imagine the people who'd want to play *Opposing Force* and *Blue Shift* would already have *Half-Life*, *Half-Life: Game of the Year Edition*, or *Half-Life Platinum*, and would have preferred a cheaper expansion disc.

In any case, it's a tough sell. If you haven't played *Opposing Force* yet, you might want to snag *Blue Shift*, and treat Barney's Big Adventure as a bonus freebie. But for just the *Blue Shift* episode, you're going to be sorely disappointed, as there's not nearly enough gameplay to make it worthwhile. Or you can buy it, beat it, and return it on the same day. Just be sure to exchange it for something with a little more longevity.

— *Colin Williamson*

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Fun while it lasts; enhanced graphics; ships with the stupendous *Half-Life: Opposing Force*.

LOWS: The *Blue Shift* episode is appallingly short; no new monsters or weapons.

BOTTOM LINE: Buy it if you don't already have *Opposing Force*, slag it off if you do.

PC GAMER 64%
ABOVE AVERAGE

No Base Building, No Resource Gathering, Just Pure Strategy and Glorious Combat!



DOMINION WARS

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

RATING PENDING RP ESRB

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CATEGORY Flight sim	REQUIRED PII 233, 64MB RAM, 1.3GB HD, 16MB 3D card
DEVELOPER Terminal Reality	WE RECOMMEND PIII 800, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card, joystick/flight yoke
PUBLISHER G.O.D.	MAXIMUM PLAYERS Massively multiplayer

Fly! II

If real aircraft manufacturers delivered planes to their customers the same way that Gathering of Developers ships new installments of its *Fly!* aviation sim, the FAA would shut them down in a heartbeat. While the first two versions were plagued with enough bugs and design flaws to ground them for months, the newest chapter to hit retail shelves sets an all-time record for AWOL features and components.

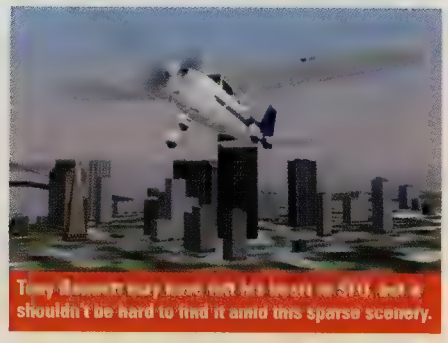
Get this: Despite being marketed as a full-priced, standalone product, *Fly! II* comes with no flight manual (either printed or on the CD), no key card, a minimal collection of sectional charts, and none of the much-ballyhooed TerraScene terrain scenery that helped rejuvenate last year's *Fly! 2K*.

Add some poorly optimized graphics coding that makes Microsoft's notoriously sluggish *Flight Simulator 2000* look like it's running at Mach speed, and you're left with the most incomplete flight-sim release of the past decade.

Unfortunately for dial-up modem users, the current patch-file collection to fix some of these issues and provide some semblance of documentation is already over 400MB in size and growing. What's more, owners of the original *Fly!* won't be able to use any of their favorite third-party aircraft and scenery add-ons until TRI gets around to writing a conversion patch.

What makes these glaring holes and missing pieces all the more frustrating is that when it *is* finally finished, *Fly! II* will easily be the best chapter in the series. Boasting a greater level of complexity than its predecessors in its eight flyable aircraft, the new sim has also proven to be remarkably stable and crash-free on most systems.

Additional goodies such as downloadable real-time weather, airframe damage, seamless multiplayer integration, and a user-friendly scenery editor serve as further exclamation points to *Fly! II*'s remarkable potential.



Terry Dowell may look cool in his leather jacket, but it shouldn't be hard to find it amid this sparse scenery.

Should've, could've, would've. The sad fact is, *Fly! II*'s absentee documentation and slide-show frame-rates make it all but unplayable out of the box. Unless you're outfitted with a broadband Internet connection, a P4/GeForce3 combo, and the patience of Job, you're better off waiting for *Flight Simulator 2002*.

— Andy Mahood

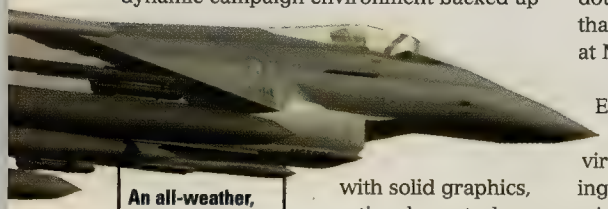
FINAL VERDICT
PC GAMER 45%
TOLERABLE

CATEGORY Flight sim	REQUIRED PII 266, 64MB RAM, 490MB HD, 8MB 3D card
DEVELOPER Digital Image Design	WE RECOMMEND PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card, joystick
PUBLISHER Rage	MAXIMUM PLAYERS 8

Eurofighter Typhoon

It's been about a year and a half since we've seen a new modern combat flight sim of any consequence (*JetFighter IV* notwithstanding), so the pressure from ravenous flight-sim fanatics to play *Eurofighter Typhoon* has been enormous.

Well, the good news is that *Typhoon* does deliver a genuinely entertaining dynamic campaign environment backed up with solid graphics, exceptional pyrotechnics, and impressive damage effects. On the downside, however, the dumbed-down avionics and overall lack of complexity and challenge are almost certain to disappoint the hardcore sim crowd. In Rage's defense, though, the game has never been promoted as a gearhead's paradise.

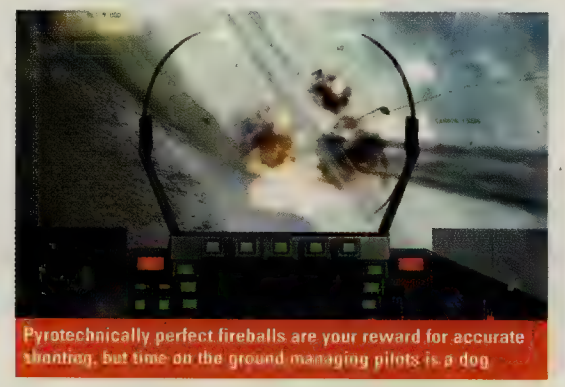


An all-weather, swing-role 21st-century fighter, the Typhoon cuts a jaunty profile.

While *Typhoon*'s flight modeling does factor in variables like aerodynamic drag and speed bleeding in turns, it also imbues each aircraft with greatly simplified handling and acceleration characteristics. The real Typhoon's performance numbers may still be classified, but I seriously doubt that it can rotate off a runway in less than five seconds or drop its landing gear at Mach 1 without incurring any damage.

Ditto with the game's avionics. Eschewing the use of a detailed 2D or 3D instrument panel for a mushy-looking virtual cockpit with some pop-up "all-seeing" MFD screens significantly compromises the game's sense of authenticity.

Typhoon's dynamic campaign is clearly the chief selling point. You'll guide one of six variously skilled NATO pilots through an immersive war scenario set in Iceland in the year 2015. According to the CNN-style news updates, advancing Russian forces have you outnumbered and outgunned, but through the mission successes of your squadrons, your small band of pilots can eventually stem the flow and ultimately turn the tide against the invaders.



Pyrotechnically perfect fireballs are your reward for accurate shooting, but time on the ground managing pilots is a dog.

The game picks up Brownie points on the visual front. While the terrain graphics are devoid of any identifiable cities or landmarks, the individual aircraft renderings are quite good. (Owners of 3dfx-based video cards should be forewarned that the game has proven to be unplayable on many systems equipped with older Voodoo cards.)

It may not be the second coming of *EF2000*, but *Eurofighter Typhoon* is still a valuable addition to the library of any combat flight simmer.

— Andy Mahood

FINAL VERDICT
PC GAMER 73%
GOOD

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Screenshots are from PlayStation game.

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PC CD
TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence
Animated Blood



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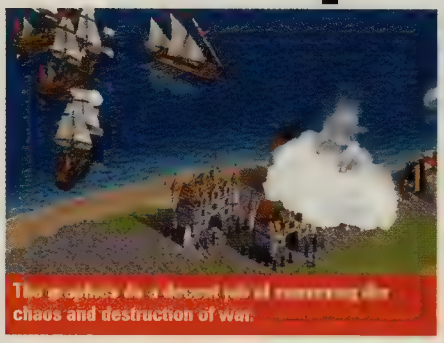
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CATEGORY	Real-time strategy	REQUIRED	P233, 32MB RAM, 400MB HD
DEVELOPER	Game World	WE RECOMMEND	PII 400, 64MB RAM, 8MB video card
PUBLISHER	CDV	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	7

Cossacks: European Wars

Europe sends us its finest *Age of Empires* clone. But its best knockoff just doesn't cut it.



The graphics do a decent job of conveying the chaos and destruction of war.



Some missions, like this one where you negotiate an enemy-filled map, are extremely frustrating.

It's well-known that many games have a tendency to be nothing more than a laundry list of features "borrowed" from superior predecessors. This trend has been particularly prevalent in the big-money real-time strategy market.

Cossacks, a new RTS game from German publisher CDV, does absolutely nothing to change that perception. If you've played the excellent *Age of Empires II*, then you've already experienced the best that *Cossacks* has to offer.

The game's setting is pre-1800 Europe. Its 85 missions and battles include actual historical conflicts like the Thirty Years War and the nail-biting Seven Year War. A total of 16 combatants factor into the game, each with a single-player campaign, including the usual heavy-hitters like England, France, Spain, Turkey, and Russia. Each side has access to infantry, cavalry, navy, and artillery, along with a tech tree that features 300 upgrades. Don't let the number of upgrades fool you, though: every side is nearly identical, and they present no real strategic differences.

Almost all of your time in *Cossacks* will be spent in the standard RTS activities of building towns, raising an army, and marching out to smash the enemy. Occasionally a mission will demand that you take a small group of soldiers and complete specific tasks. These duties are mostly of the annoying variety: at one point in the Tartar campaign, for example, you have to escort a VIP whose pathfinding is so bad that he seems magnetically drawn to his assassins.

Resource management plays a much larger role in *Cossacks* than it does in most other RTS games. You can build a Market that lets you sell abundant resources in exchange for rare resources. Unfortunately, you have to handle all the selling and buying *manually* — a micromanagement nightmare when you're in the middle of waging a full-scale war. Automating this process would have eliminated a huge burden on the fun part of gameplay.

Cossacks does a good job of forcing you to maintain a certain level of resources at all times: once units are created, you have to store enough food to feed them and enough gold to pay them. If you fail to maintain enough of either resource, a famine will strike and kill off many of your citizens, or the military will mutiny. You have to think strategically at all times, lest half your army turn on you.

Of course, if that happens, fighting off the troops won't be much of a challenge — the AI in *Cossacks* is horrid. Officers are required to create formations, but even when they're present, your boys often break and scatter at the first sign of trouble. Units get trapped behind other units (especially prevalent in navies), riflemen refuse to fire at close range (which you could argue is realistic, but I'd say steals from the fun), and your artillery won't return long-range fire automatically, even if they're being heavily bombarded. All these problems quickly escalate into massive frustration because the battles are huge, with hundreds of units fighting at any one time. Managing an army of dimwits isn't all that enjoyable.

On too many levels, *Cossacks* is little more than an amalgamation of better games — right down to its *Age of Empires*–inspired graphics. It fails to offer anything that justifies its sticker price. After a few hours, anyone who's played a decent RTS before will be bored with it.

— William Harms



In an example of great AI, my boys stand around while they're being shot.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Decent graphics; large battles; unique resource-management features.

LOWS: Horrible AI; frustrating economic model; annoying scripted missions.

BOTTOM LINE: A bland recycling of other RTS games. Spend your money elsewhere.

PC GAMER ABOVE AVERAGE 63%

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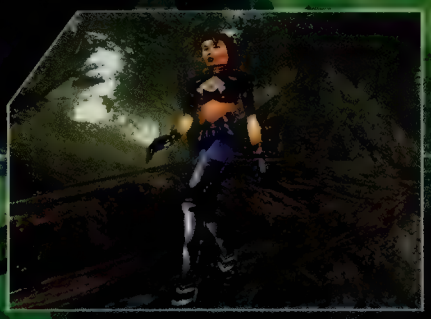

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NC Interactive
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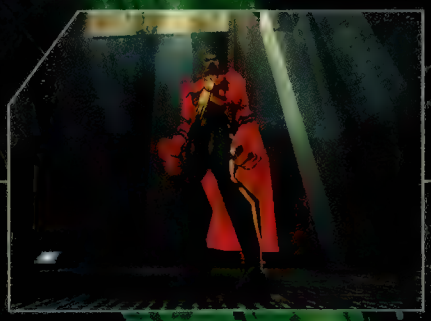
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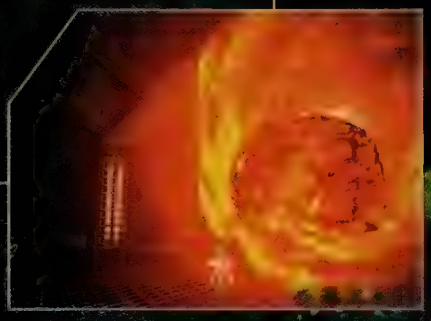
Craft your team from a cast of seven characters. Investigate bizarre mysteries. Assemble alien weapons. Master challenging mini-games.

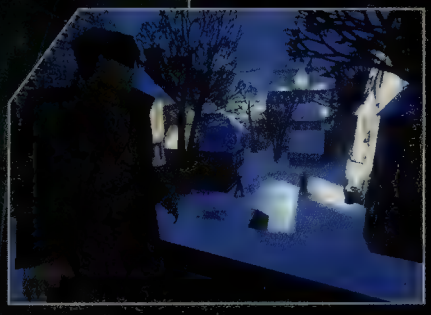
Battle across six planets. Uncover devious secrets. Play some Pooper.











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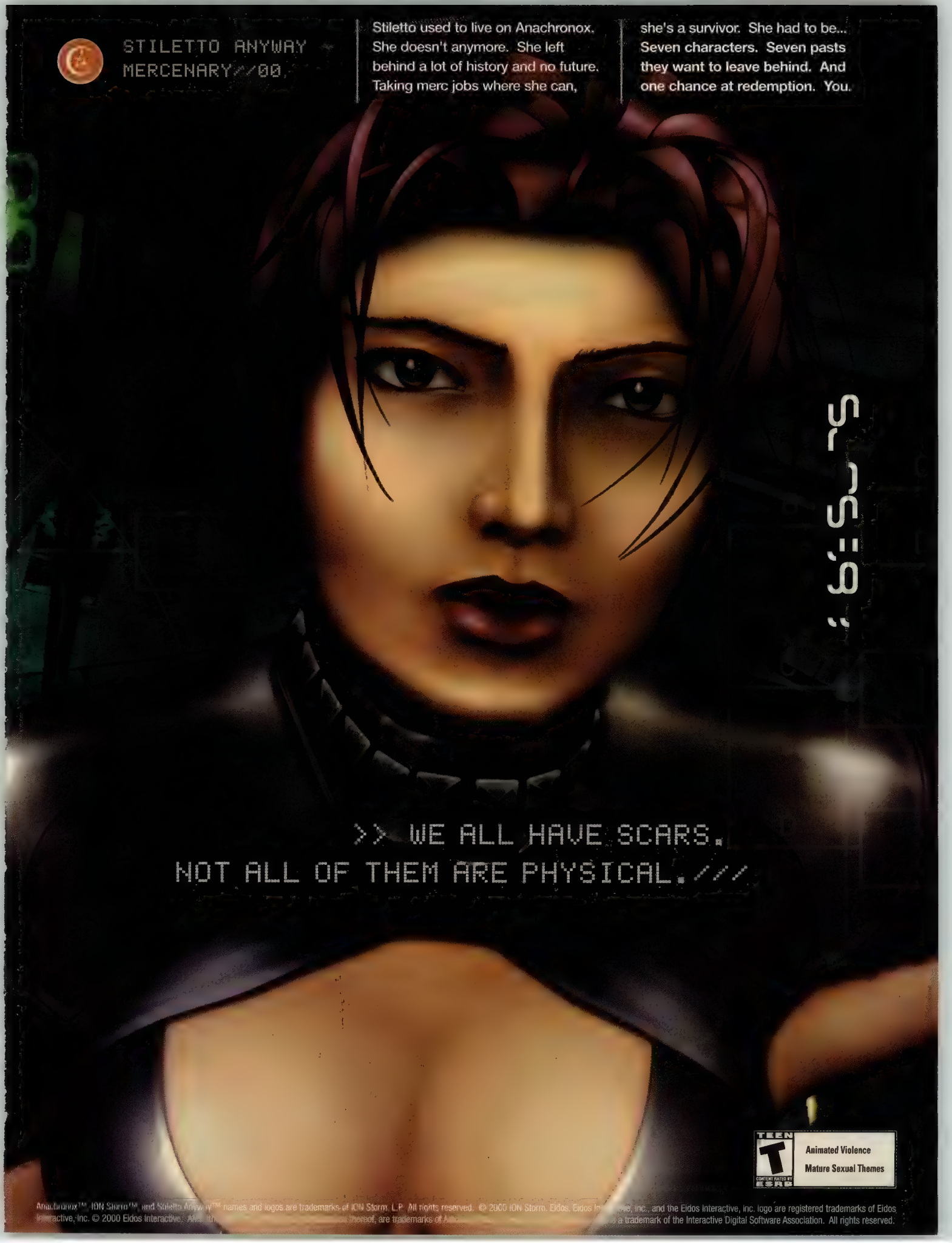
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CATEGORY Action	REQUIRED PII 266, 32MB RAM, 410MB HD
DEVELOPER Torus Games	WE RECOMMEND PII 400, 64MB RAM
PUBLISHER Xicat Interactive	MAXIMUM PLAYERS 8

Carmageddon 3



Uh oh, it's the Fuzz! You may be more nimble than this police cruiser, but be sure to stay out of its way.

I'd like to say that *Carmageddon 3* carries on a fine tradition in an uproariously enjoyable series of racing games, but if I did that, I'd be a crazy liar. Hailing from the UK, the *Carmageddon* games are offensively violent car-combat racers with plenty of spurting blood and road-killed grannies, and little in terms of polished gameplay.

Your destructive ability depends on your willingness to wrestle with the game's Bizarro Physics™. You may find it best to pile-drive baddies into a wall, or "wedge" yourself under their vehicle, using your momentum to push 'em off a cliff. Sadly, the collision detection and resulting damage models are wildly unpredictable.

Even the typically enjoyable crusade of pedestrian-squashing is difficult, since those bastards are harder targets than Jean-Claude Van Damme. After a number of satisfying hit-and-runs, I noticed the "Kill" counter at the top of the screen wasn't going up; turns out that I had just *knocked off their limbs* — most of them were hopping around on one leg, nursing a bloody stump. And I have to kill *200* of these guys to win the race? Oy vey.

That's not to say that *Carmageddon 3* doesn't have its moments. It was fun to lure police tanks into a train tunnel, and then watch as an inbound locomotive launched them skyward in spectacular fashion. The various pick-ups scattered around the combat zones are also good for a few laughs. (I particularly like the Turbo Nutter Bastard Nitrous.)

But graphics-wise, the game's pretty blah, and it'll still put your system to the test: my poor Athlon 800 and Voodoo5 were begging for mercy, and I could *barely* maintain a 30-fps frame-rate.

All in all, *Carmageddon 3* is a mediocre addition to a second-class series, and the only folks who should bite are granny-smooshing freaks. Every one else should treat this one as if it were an especially ripe chunk of road kill. Offensive? Yes. Fun? Not for long.

— Colin Williamson

FINAL VERDICT
PC GAMER 59%
MERELY OKAY

CATEGORY Racing	REQUIRED PII 266, 64MB RAM, 115MB HD, 3D card
DEVELOPER 14 Degrees East	WE RECOMMEND PIII 750, 256MB RAM, 400MB HD, 64MB 3D card
PUBLISHER Interplay	MAXIMUM PLAYERS 8

Off-Road Redneck Racing

I'll be the first to admit that I didn't go into this review with the highest of hopes. C'mon — a bargain-priced racing game ($20) sporting the moniker of the most politically incorrect franchise in gaming history just doesn't scream "quality software." I'll also be the first to admit when I'm wrong. *Off-Road Redneck Racing* is a well-designed game that's a whole lot of fun.



The racing environments are a pleasure to look at, and many have a staggering number of alternate routes and/or shortcuts

The reason for *Redneck Racing*'s success is that it rises above its adolescent theme and nails many of the basic elements that make up a good racing game. While I wouldn't go so far as to call the physics engine "real-world," it does a great job of making you feel like you're driving an off-road vehicle over varied terrain.

Run through a muddy patch of ground, and you're almost able to feel your wheels sink in the sludge. Hit the gas a little too forcefully, and you'll soon learn that coasting is the best way to get through mud. The same convincing feel applies when you're driving on snow or during a rainstorm. The cool physics also affect the obstacles on the course. Hit a crate or a traffic cone, and it'll go bouncing around quite realistically.

The only negative part of the driving model is that you can't damage your vehicle, and running into things head-on (like rocks) will do little more than stop you in your tracks.

The graphics, both of the environment and the cars, are mostly excellent. The game is a processor hog, though, and even on an optimum system you'll run into some pretty heavy slowdown when encountering water.

Game modes include time trials, single-race challenges (with two-player split-screen available), LAN play (no modem or Internet options, unfortunately), and the challenging, addictive Championship mode.

Racing fans, do yourself a favor and give *Off-Road Redneck Racing* a try. It ain't just for rednecks.

— Rob Smolka

FINAL VERDICT
PC GAMER 78%
GOOD

Winner of Maximum PC's "Clash of the Gaming Titans"

In terms of pure price-to-performance ratio, Falcon takes the cake.

Because the Falcon won every benchmark, the scores of the other machines are represented as percentages of the Falcon's scores.

In this roundup, the best system is also the least expensive.

Maximum PC
May 2001

The Falcon Northwest Mach V demonstrates the most consistently strong performance across all tests.

the Mach V beat out the Alienware Aurora DDR system in all the 3D game tests by a steady 5 percent

Gamespot Hardware,
Clash of the Titans Faceoff
April 2001

what you get uniquely from Falcon Northwest is their exquisite craftsmanship. Open the case, and it's so clean and neat you'd think it wasn't fully built yet.

...it's wicked fast, built with loving care from quality components, intricately documented, and backed by fantastic support.

Computer Games Magazine
May 2001

FALCON NORTHWEST

Kicking other PCs Butts since 1992

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE
May 2001

COMPUTER GAMES STAMP OF APPROVAL
May 2001

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD EDITORS' CHOICE
June 2001

all our hardware fantasies came true when Falcon Northwest brought in what could only be considered every gamer's dream system. we haven't been this excited in months!

PC Gamer
May 2001

It's hard not to recommend the Mach V. It's a super-fast machine and building it yourself would easily set you back another $1000!

Computer Gaming World
June 2001



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CATEGORY	Flight combat	REQUIRED	PII 266, 64MB RAM, 650MB HD, 16MB 3D card
DEVELOPER	Madia	WE RECOMMEND	PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 750MB HD, 32MB 3D card, joystick
PUBLISHER	Bethesda Softworks	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	16

Echelon

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

Surprise, surprise. Bethesda sets the new standard in space shooters with this stunning release.



Tweaky weapons systems are at your disposal through the cockpit HUD.



Echelon's light-sourcing and plume effects are absolutely astonishing.

Before I begin this review, I should tell you how terribly inconvenient it was for me to stop playing *Echelon* just so I could tell you about it. Bethesda's new space shooter is one of the most wickedly addictive combat flight sims I've played in years.

You read that right. *Echelon* is a space shooter with a unique twist. Shirking the traditional inky blackness of space for the rich gravity-bound terrain of a far-flung planet, the game plays more like a futuristic version of *Falcon 4.0* than *Wing Commander*. With over 20 weapons systems to choose from and 14 unique aircraft to fly — ranging from nimble, hover-capable fighters to heavily armed marauders — the experience is a remarkably rewarding one for Luke Skywalker and Chuck Yeager fans alike.

Much of this crossover appeal comes from the careful melding of a well-paced branching campaign with convincing aircraft dynamics, solid AI, superb 3D audio, and some of the most eye-popping graphics to make their way into a PC game. *Echelon*'s diverse terrain map covers an area bigger than Texas and boasts some truly astonishing mountainous and oceanic topography.

When combined with the game's detailed aircraft renderings, unparalleled light-sourcing effects, and extraordinary pyrotechnics, the experience is superbly visceral. Direct missile-hits turn your targets into blinding fireballs, weapon discharges reflect realistically off metallic surfaces, and enemy ships set off impressive secondary concussion blasts when impacting against the ground.

The dust and particle effects are equally mesmerizing, as is the game's richly immersive audio work. *Echelon*'s impressive aural environment convincingly blends together subtle propulsion and wind noises with frantic radio traffic and the cacophonous clamor of heavy battle. Absolutely glorious stuff all around.

Russian developer Madia has penned an intriguing story for *Echelon* that places you on the front lines as a Galaxy Federation pilot fighting a rebellious alien uprising on the planet Velian. A short training course is followed by a pair of back-to-back scripted campaigns offering impressive gameplay depth and replay value. You'll earn promotions and medals as you work your way through the game's highly challenging and extremely varied mission structure.

Echelon's challenging opponent AI routinely puts up a spirited battle, while your wingmen demonstrate plenty of independent skill. In addition to the core campaign structure, there's an Instant Action mode and an extensive multiplayer menu that supports up to 16 players in head-to-head or co-op action. (Although online play's impressively warp- and lag-free, the absence of a dedicated online game server demands that you ferret out your own competition.)

A few issues with the game prevent it from taking home every accolade under the Velian sun. Chief among these is a scenery pop-up problem that's actually exaggerated by the heavy fogging technique Madia has employed to mask it. Occasional CD-access pauses also crop up from time to time, and the game's autopilot feature has an unnerving habit of flying you directly into a wingman or a mountain on certain missions.

These minor caveats aside, *Echelon* is a first-rate flight-combat title that sets some lofty new standards for a joystick-controlled game. You'll be hard-pressed to find a better-looking or -playing aerial shooter on the market today.

— Andy Mahood



Home base might be a fortified bunker, a floating platform, or a water-based aircraft carrier.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Stellar space-sim graphics; superb sound; massive terrain; rich branching campaign; solid AI.

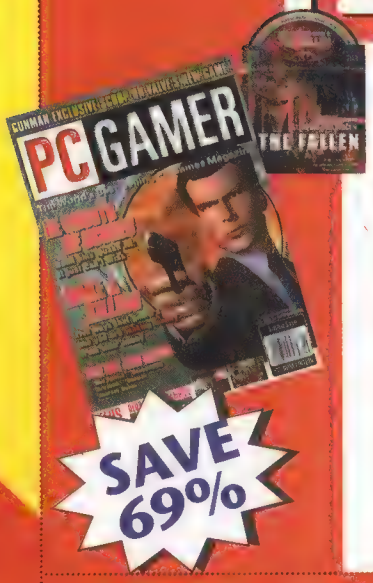
LOWS: Occasional scenery pop-up; autopilot anomalies; no dedicated multiplayer server.

BOTTOM LINE: Flight sim meets space shooter, and it's love at first sight.

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE **91%**

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The World's Best-Selling PC Games Magazine

PC GAMER

CATEGORY First-person shooter	REQUIRED *Elite Force* full version, PII 233, 64MB RAM, 8MB 3D card
DEVELOPER Raven	WE RECOMMEND PII 333, 128MB RAM, 16MB 3D card
PUBLISHER Activision	MAXIMUM PLAYERS 64

Elite Force Expansion Pack

Though Janeway and crew have violated their last temporal prime directive on UPN, the adventure continues with this expansion to the excellent *Star Trek: Voyager — Elite Force*.

The selling point — a Virtual Voyager mode set during the tail end of *Elite Force* — lets you (as Ensign Munro) walk around the ship at your leisure, solving simple puzzles to gain access to hidden areas, invading private quarters to read the crew's log journals, and collecting trinkets such as *Elite Force* action figures.



In Specialist multiplayer mode, you're one of six classes. The Medic can heal or kill others using a hypospray.

Except for four all-new holodeck missions (the largest of which is a black-and-white scenario based on *Voyager*'s Captain Proton holographic novels; it's about as big as a single level from the original game), there's no fighting — only wandering and rampant kleptomania.

For a *Voyager* nut, this voyeurism might sound like a dream come true, but aside from Jeri Ryan's Seven of Nine, no new voiceovers were recorded, so any crewmembers you meet border on being rude. (I was told "I can't talk now" so many times that I wondered if Ensign Munro might need a quick shot of Romulan mouthwash.)

Not only that, but your primary mission — collecting doodads — is all for naught. Catch 'em all and you get...nada. Virtual Voyager's a fun way to spend an hour, but I wish Raven had made it into a full-blown adventure with a real mystery to solve.

Where this expansion truly shines is in the addition of several new *EF* multiplayer modes, maps, and skins. Besides seven new holomatch and nine new



Sick of roaming *Voyager*? Head to Deck 15 and play *Borg Slayer*, a topdown arcade game.

CTF maps (plus five user-made maps), the add-on includes five much-needed multiplayer (deathmatch and teamplay) options that, unlike those in *Quake III: Team Arena*, people may actually want to play. My favorite is Action Hero, which pits one player — tricked out with weapons, ammo, and health — against everyone else.

If you loved *Elite Force* and still play its multiplayer element, then this expansion will have you loving it all over again. Just don't expect to be caught up in a fresh, engaging new adventure.

— Chuck Osborn

FINAL VERDICT
PC GAMER 74%
GOOD

CATEGORY Real-time strategy	REQUIRED PII 266, 64MB RAM, 650MB HD, 8MB 3D card
DEVELOPER Bitmap Brothers	WE RECOMMEND PIII 600 or Athlon, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card
PUBLISHER EON Digital	MAXIMUM PLAYERS 8

Z: Steel Soldiers

Not too many remember the original *Z*, and for good reason: the RTS was released just a couple of months before *Red Alert* and was quickly forgotten in the wake of that game's huge success. Five years later, the Bitmap Brothers have produced the sequel — but it's pretty obvious that Da Bruddahs didn't spend that entire period honing the game to perfection.

What makes *Steel Soldiers* stand out from other futuristic RTS titles is how it handles resource management. Instead of harvesting a magic mineral that can be used for all your production needs, you must claim grids of territory by having ground troops seize (i.e., touch) a flag. Nabbing territory quickly at the start of a mission is crucial to success, encouraging you to opt for more aggressive tactics than in other RTS games.

You didn't have to worry about building factories or refineries in the original Z, but that's changed with *Steel Soldiers* — and for many it will be considered a change for the worse. The action gets pretty frenzied after just a few missions, and without options to adjust game speed or issue commands while the game is paused, you'll struggle.

Still, more action-focused strategy players will gobble this up — provided the game will run for more than 15 minutes at a time. Over a period of four days on a plain-jane system — featuring a TNT2 video card and a Sound Blaster AWE64 with up-to-date drivers, both of which are allegedly supported — the game constantly locked up, so much so that it wasn't a matter of *whether* it would crash, but of how long it would take before it happened.



Enemies strike at weakly fortified positions and concentrate fire on units posing the greatest threat.

With 30 single-player missions, 30 unit types (including ships and planes), and GameSpy support for solid multiplayer action, *Steel Soldiers* has the potential to be satisfying fare for strategy fans. This is one case, however, where you should really play the demo on the *PCG* CD to see if you like it.

— Stephen Poole

FINAL VERDICT
PC GAMER 66%
ABOVE AVERAGE

CATEGORY	Strategy	REQUIRED	PII 266, 64MB RAM, 150MB HD
DEVELOPER	BreakAway Games	WE RECOMMEND	128MB RAM
PUBLISHER	Strategy First	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	8

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

Waterloo: Napoleon's Last Battle

I've never before used the word "eloquent" to describe a wargame, but in this case, nothing less will do. *Waterloo*'s design weds the very best of "game science" with a sense of aesthetic wonder that verges on Art.

What you see on your monitor is strikingly beautiful. This vast array of flags, uniforms, and weapons transcends mere pixels — the units that march and fight across the rolling battlefields of Europe look like exquisite hand-painted miniatures.

The game engine is a tried-and-true refinement of the one Sid Meier developed for *Gettysburg* and *Antietam*, extensively tweaked to reflect the significant differences between Napoleonic tactics and those of the American Civil War.



Playing the entire battle is an awesome challenge. Be sure to warm up with introductory scenarios.

Waterloo's AI fights you with a smooth, well-oiled professionalism. I seldom felt that it was *cheating* — not blatantly or grossly, anyhow. But I *did* feel as though I were up against a much more experienced commander who had an uncanny knack for knowing just when the balances shifted in favor of a murderous cavalry attack.

Thirty scenarios break the gigantic daylong battle into digestible portions. Like Napoleon and Wellington, your leadership will be more efficient if you assign general objectives to your AI-controlled brigade/division commanders and let them worry about siting gun batteries and maintaining coherent formations between individual battalions.

Veteran wargamers will positively revel in all of this depth, pageantry, and tactical sophistication, but I don't want to discourage newcomers from diving in. *Waterloo* has excellent tutorials and superb documentation, and if you stick to the smaller battles while you assimilate the historical gestalt, the sheer drama and excitement of the action will also seduce you.



This cavalry melee really highlights the great level of detail that chief designers Charles Kibler and Keith Rocco have provided.

Add to all of these virtues solid multiplayer options and a robust scenario editor, so you can create custom battles of any desired size or flavor (huge cavalry melees, for instance), and you have one of the finest wargames in PC history. *Waterloo* is a masterpiece of intelligent, caring design.

— William R. Trotter

FINAL VERDICT
PC GAMER 90%
EDITORS' CHOICE

CATEGORY	Action	REQUIRED	PII 266, 64MB RAM, 350MB HD, 8MB 3D card
DEVELOPER	Zombie	WE RECOMMEND	PII 400, 128MB RAM, 16MB 3D card
PUBLISHER	Disney Interactive	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	12

Atlantis: Trial by Fire

The first two, maybe four, minutes of *Atlantis: Trial by Fire* are terrific. The game starts off with a beautifully animated video of your character, Thaddeus Thatch, embarking on a voyage to find the lost city of Atlantis in a very slick Jules Verne–style submarine. The entire segment is pure Disney in terms of beauty, style, and storytelling, complete with a terrific soundtrack.

When the game kicks from this cel-animated intro to the first-person LithTech-powered action segment, it's still okay. A sea monster attacks and you must make your way through the damaged sub as it lists to one side, slowly sinking toward the bottom of the ocean. There's a tense atmosphere as you try to keep your footing and make it to the escape pods, all while dodging busted steam pipes and jumping over broken walkways. Overall, it's a great way to start.

If developer Zombie had managed to keep that level of tension for the remaining scant few hours of gameplay, *Atlantis* would have been a winner. But it didn't. The rest of *Atlantis* is a mix of ho-hum levels that loosely follow the plot of the upcoming movie.

Most of the game takes place in the ruins of the lost city, which has an Incan flair, created from art direction inspired by Mike "Hellboy" Mignola. But again, collision-detection problems rear their ugly heads. Several times, I found myself stuck in nothing. I'd jump from one platform to another or get near a wall and find myself unable to move. Two of those times I had to reload the game because I couldn't get myself free.



Apparently, after sinking into the ocean, Atlantis became home to monsters that dislike people.

By the time I finished the single-player game, a whopping two hours had gone by. Parents may like *Atlantis*' non-violent nature (such as its use of "tools" rather than typical FPS weapons), and it could be a nice gift for younger fans of the movie. But unless your last name is Flanders, this probably isn't for you.

— Li C. Kuo

FINAL VERDICT
PC GAMER 50%
MERELY OKAY

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Where does one draw the line when it comes to self-love?

(Sadly, this is a true story...)

Okay, I admit it: I may have some very slight narcissistic tendencies. Take, for example, my latest foray into self-appreciation — my new business cards. See, the powers that be made the unfortunate mistake of letting us *PC Gamer* editors put whatever we want on the back of them.



Dan, Chuck, and Joe all put random pick-up lines and whatnot on the back of theirs. (You're sure to win over the hearts of millions with those things, guys — *cough*.) Jeremy selected a lovely photo of Coconut Monkey, and Li opted for the industry-standard *PC Gamer* logo (yawn).

What about me, the man who loves himself like no other? Wouldn't you know it, I slapped on a big silly photo of me in my best attempt to be James Bond — as big as the law would allow. The shot is similar to one of last year's Hard Stuff photo shoots — September 2000, to be exact — and I do believe that placing it there on my card was a perfectly grand idea.

Since taking possession of the new cards, I've been terrorizing my girlfriend with them. Everywhere we go, I threaten to take out my card and show it to people. She cringes in fear and then threatens to leave me. Recently, I've taken to placing said cards in random places throughout her apartment. She opens the drawer to get some socks... BAM! It's "TheVede." She gets into her car and puts her sun visor down... BAM! It's "TheVede."

At left is a copy of my new business card. Try leaving it in your significant other's underwear drawer and see what she says. And make sure to yell "BAM! It's 'TheVede'" when she finds it.

Greg Vederman,
Senior Associate Editor

HSTRINITY

WELCOME TO A BRAVE NEW WORLD

So you want to build a new PC, huh? As you may know, it can be a tricky affair. Luckily, Hard Stuff editor Greg Vederman is here to help you select the best parts for the job. The prices listed below (obtained almost entirely from *www.pricewatch.com*) reflect the lowest prices we could find as we went to press.

ENTRY-LEVEL SYSTEM

PRICE: ROUGHLY $999

CASE	
300-watt ATX form factor	$100
PROCESSOR	
Intel Celeron 800MHz FCGA	$87
MOTHERBOARD	
Gigabyte GA-6VX7-4X	$84
MEMORY	
256MB PC-133 SDRAM	$39
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM	
Creative Labs PC-DVD Ovation 12x with software DVD decoding	$99
FLOPPY DRIVE	
Samsung 3.5-inch 1.44MB	$8
HARD DRIVE	
40.0 IBM Deskstar	$97
SOUND CARD	
Creative Labs SB Live! Value	$36
MODEM	
3COM #2976 56K v.90 Hardware Modem	$60
MONITOR	
17-inch Optiquest Q71	$170
VIDEO CARD	
GeForce2 MX	$53
JOYSTICK	
Logitech WingMan Digital	$17
GAMEPAD	
Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad	$23
SPEAKERS	
Labtech Pulse-424 — 2.1	$39
KEYBOARD	
Addtronics	$15
USB MOUSE	
Logitech or Microsoft	$39
TOTAL	$966

MID-RANGE SYSTEM

PRICE: ROUGHLY $1,000

CASE	
300-watt ATX form factor	$100
PROCESSOR	
AMD Thunderbird 1.333GHz	$176
MOTHERBOARD	
Asus A7V	$118
MEMORY	
256MB PC-133 SDRAM	$39
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM	
PC-DVD Encore 12x with Dxr3 Technology	$123
FLOPPY DRIVE	
Samsung 3.5-inch 1.44MB	$8
HARD DRIVE	
IBM Deskstar 75GXP 307060	$197
SOUND CARD	
Creative Labs SB Live! MP3+ 5.1	$77
MODEM	
3COM #2976 56K v.90 Hardware Modem	$60
MONITOR	
19-inch NEC FE950	$399
VIDEO CARD	
NVIDIA GeForce2 Ultra	$299
JOYSTICK	
Microsoft SideWinder Precision Pro	$53
GAMEPAD	
Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad	$23
SPEAKERS	
Logitech SoundMan Xtrusio DSR-100 — 4.1	$132
KEYBOARD	
Addtronics Keyboard	$15
MOUSE	
Logitech or Microsoft USB mouse	$39
TOTAL	$1,858

DREAM SYSTEM

PRICE: $3,000 AND ABOVE

CASE	
300-watt ATX form factor	$100
PROCESSOR	
Intel P4 1.7GHz	$389
MOTHERBOARD	
Intel 850-based chipset	$182
MEMORY	
Two sticks of 128MB PC800 RDRAM	$184
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM	
Pioneer 16x DVD-ROM	$65
DVD DECODER	
RealMagic Hollywood Plus PCI card	$50
BURNER	
Plextor 16x10x40 CD-RW	$215
FLOPPY DRIVE	
Samsung 3.5-inch 1.44MB	$8
HARD DRIVE(S)	
Two 81.9GB ATA-100 Maxtor DiamondMax Proxima	$480
IDE RAID CONTROLLER	
Promise FastTrak100 (ATA-100)	$75
SOUND CARD	
Creative Labs SB Live! Platinum 5.1	$149
MODEM	
3COM #2976 56K v.90 Hardware Modem	$60
MONITOR	
21-inch Optiquest Q110	$541
VIDEO CARD	
NVIDIA GeForce3	$399
JOYSTICK	
Saitek X36 Flight Control System (USB)	$96
GAMEPAD	
Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad	$23
SPEAKERS	
Klipsch ProMedia v.2-400	$299
KEYBOARD	
Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro	$40
USB MOUSE	
Original IntelliMouse with IntelliEye technology	$55
TOTAL	$3,410





GEFORCE3 SHOWDOWN

NVIDIA's next generation arrives at an unexpectedly low price

As you probably know, GeForce3 has been plagued by delays — unusual for NVIDIA and its partners. The silver lining is that the wait has brought with it a price drop of $100: most cards will now retail for $399 instead of the earlier-reported $499.

This month we received three final-production cards: Hercules' 3D Prophet III, ELSA's GLADIAC 920, and Visiontek's creatively titled GeForce3. Before we start talking about what differs among these cards, here's what they have in common:

- **Core clock: 200MHz**
- **64MB of DDR memory: 460MHz**
- **S-Video out — for connecting to a TV**
- **NVIDIA's Lightspeed Memory Architecture — an enhanced pipe that yields a substantial increase in performance over GeForce2 Ultra, despite having the same clock memory speeds.**
- **NVIDIA's nFinite-FX engine — a newly enhanced programmable T&L engine that allows for much more freedom for developers when it comes to coding their games, and yields, truly, the most impressive graphics currently possible to the consumer in games that make use of its amazing, DirectX 8–based feature set.**
- **NVIDIA's "HRAA" — short for "High-resolution Antialiasing," this is a fancy way of saying that full-scene, full-frame antialiasing is now possible at high resolutions (1024x768 and below in most instances) with GeForce3.**
- **All cards were rock-solid stable and never locked during our tests.**
- **Virtually identical performance — making each of these three cards the undisputed heavyweights of current 3D-card technology. You want the fastest and the best? These are it!**

Here's how each of the three cards distinguishes itself:

GLADIAC 920

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE



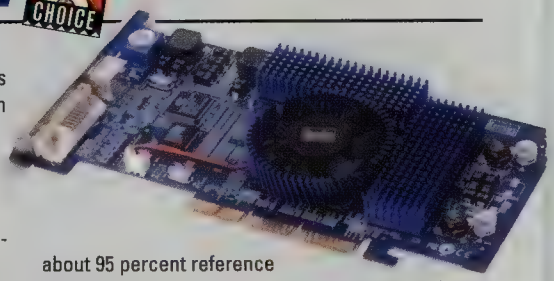
GLADIAC 920 is a vanilla GeForce3 in that it's identical to NVIDIA's reference design. Even the drivers that are included in the package are simply NVIDIA's own latest reference drivers. This isn't such a bad thing at all, given that NVIDIA's own drivers are always top-notch and are usually the most compatible with the newest games. The main selling point here is an exclusive, DirectX 8–enhanced full version of *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*. To be perfectly honest, it's rather difficult to tell the difference between the enhanced version and the original, but the game is still great in its patched state, and it's a treat to get it for free. In addition to *Giants*, this card ships with ELSA's own ELSAmovie 2000 DVD software, which is solid but tends not to be quite as good as PowerDVD (which ships with Hercules' 3D Prophet III).

COMPANY
ELSA
www.elsa.com
800-272-3572

PRICE
$399 (M.S.R.P.)

3D Prophet III

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

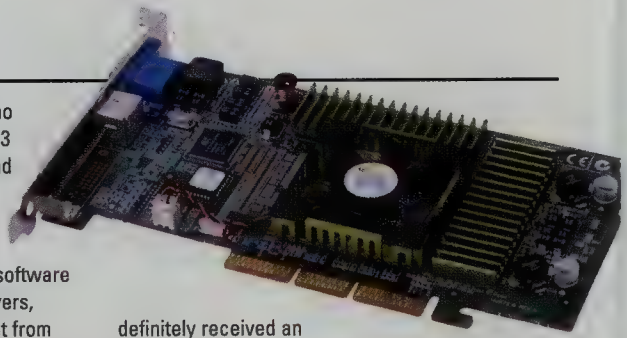


At $429, the 3D Prophet III is the most expensive GeForce3 in our showdown. It's also the only card that deviates at all from NVIDIA's reference design. Other than the obvious difference in color and the shape of the cooling fan atop the GPU, the Prophet III also sports a DVI-D-out for connecting a digital flat-panel display. For the extra $30 you also get a small S-video–to-composite adapter cable for use with TVs without S-video inputs. Hercules is also the only company thus far that has seen fit to include custom drivers. They're about 95 percent reference drivers at heart, but at least your computer will report that you've got a "3D Prophet III" instead of the generic "GeForce3" label reported when using either of the other two cards. This board ships with 3D Tweaker 2.0, PowerDVD, and 3Deep gamma-correction software.

COMPANY
Hercules
www.hercules.com
877-484-5536

PRICE
$429 (M.S.R.P.)

GeForce3



This card is the very definition of "no frills." For $399, you get a GeForce3 reference design, a driver disc, and a basic (albeit helpful) installation manual. While this card performed just as well as the other two, it lacks any software other than its drivers, which are straight from NVIDIA — no tweaks, no changes. You don't even get DVD-ROM software. If the ELSA card were a little bit more expensive, or if this card were a little less expensive, it would have definitely received an Editors' Choice award. Don't necessarily let the lack of an award keep you from Visiontek: If DVD-ROM software isn't important to you, this fine young specimen is every bit as powerful as either of the other GeForce3s.

COMPANY
Visiontek
www.visiontek.com
(retail outlets only)

PRICE
$399 (M.S.R.P.)

Let's see how they perform on a P4 1.7GHz machine!

	QUAKE III*					MDK 2*					3DMark2001**							
	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	1280 x 768	1600 x 1200	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	1280 x 768	1600 x 1200	3DMARKS	GAME 1 Car Chase	GAME 2 Dragothic	GAME 3 Lobby	GAME 4 Nature	FILL RATE Mega Texels per second	VERTEX SHADER	PIXEL SHADER
GLADIAC 920	176.7 fps	170.5 fps	141.0 fps	93.7 fps	66.2 fps	187.6 fps	186.8 fps	172.4 fps	118.9 fps	82.5 fps	5,695	High: 34.7 fps	High: 41.5 fps	High: 50.4 fps	20.4 fps	1172.4	38.1 fps	75.7 fps
3D Prophet III	177.5 fps	171.4 fps	141.1 fps	93.7 fps	66.2 fps	186.2 fps	186.6 fps	172.6 fps	118.9 fps	82.5 fps	5,791	High: 35.1 fps	High: 41.5 fps	High: 50.6 fps	20.4 fps	1172.5	38.1 fps	75.5 fps
Visiontek GeForce3	177.2 fps	170.1 fps	141.0 fps	93.7 fps	66.2 fps	187.0 fps	185.0 fps	172.5 fps	117.9 fps	82.5 fps	5,685	High: 34.8 fps	High: 41.5 fps	High: 50.2 fps	20.4 fps	1172.4	38.1 fps	75.5 fps

*All tests run in 32-bit color with all graphic effects set to max. **All tests run in 32-bit color at 1024 x 768 with all graphic effects set to max.

As you can see, these three cards perform almost exactly the same. So let features and price guide your purchase.

HSPREVIEW

Space Devilfish



We were so taken with Idizm's Space Devilfish (a product we had never heard of before) when we saw it at this year's E3, we pleaded with the company's CEO to let us take home one of his demo units after the show.

Here's the rub: As much as we love the product, it's currently sold only in Korea. Idizm's primary goal at E3 was to find a U.S. distributor. Whether or not that happened is as yet unknown. We're hoping they pulled it off, though, because we've got our cash in hand, ready to buy!

COMPANY
Idizm
www.idizm.com

PRICE
Not available in U.S.

Several companies were demonstrating "keyboard controllers" at E3, including such big names as Belkin and ThrustMaster. These types of devices are used in place of a keyboard for playing (mostly) action games in conjunction with the mouse you already own. After seeing all these controllers, several features seemed to set the Devilfish apart. (Though, to be fair, none of the other products in this category were in their final form, so we're withholding judgment until we've tested the final products.) For starters, the Devilfish looks wicked cool and is ergonomic as can be. It has a raised tail for arm and wrist support, as well as a slightly raised, oval button layout that keeps your hand in high spirits. The buttons themselves are a good size, fully programmable, and offer an appropriate level of resistance when pressed. And as you can see from the picture, there's almost enough of 'em for you to never need your keyboard again!

Sturdy spring-loaded clips can be folded out from the Devilfish's underbelly to grip your leg in case you want to use it there instead of on a desk. We thought this feature was a bit strange at first, but then we tried it ourselves and it felt comfortable and natural.

The Devilfish likes to boogie, so vibration feedback is present, too. And when the unit is attached to your leg, force effects feel even stronger than normal. While our unit was working perfectly at the show, sadly, we couldn't get it to rumble once we got it back to the office. We subsequently learned that the North American beta drivers we were given allow for force effects only under Windows 98 SE. Final drivers should get us rumbling away under Windows ME, but they weren't available at press time.

In a world that spits out worthless PC peripherals day after day, we're hoping that a quality product like the Devilfish eventually gets to see the light of day here in the U.S. If and when that happens, look for a full review here in *PC Gamer*.

"The Area 51 runs crop circles around the competition!"

-PC Gamer 2001



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GeForce3™

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SoundBlaster LIVE! 3D Sound Card
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Speaker & Subwoofer System
Pioneer 16X/40X DVD Player
Plexwriter 16X/10X/40X CD-RW IDE
Black ATX Mid-Tower Case 300 Watt PS
Black 107-Enhanced Keyboard
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HERCULES

3D Prophet 4500

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE



COMPANY
Hercules
www.hercules.com
877-484-5536

PRICE
$149 M.S.R.P.

What options do you have if your pockets aren't nearly deep enough to buy a GeForce3? If you asked us last month, we'd have told you to buy a GeForce2 MX. They list for just under $150, and for the money, they were tough to beat — until now.

At the heart of the 3D Prophet 4500 beats a fourth-generation PowerVR chip called Kyro II. If the name "PowerVR" sounds familiar, it's with good reason — the second-generation chip powers Sega's Dreamcast gaming console. This isn't the first time PowerVR technology has come to the PC. It is, however, the first time it's been done right — both in its hardware and software implementations. In the past, either the hardware was too little too late, or the drivers weren't reliable, or both. In partnering with Hercules, however, STMicro and VideoLogic (creator of PowerVR) have really produced a winner of a 3D card.

Like all PowerVR solutions, the key to the 4500's power lies in its tile-based rendering and its ability to make use of HSR (hidden surface removal). Basically what this does is to allow the 4500 to calculate only those areas of a 3D scene that are visible to the viewer. This system is different from traditional 3D cards, which must calculate every triangle in a scene, often resulting in unnecessary performance hits. (The GeForce line works like this — except for GeForce3, which implements its own HSR technique.)

This technology has other advantages. FSAA is extremely viable when using a 4500, and while you aren't going to be able to run it at resolutions as high as on a GeForce3, both 2x and 4x AA look fantastic and run smoothly as long as you've got a relatively fast CPU and don't run above 1024x768 (800x600 is the sweet spot). Image quality is great, also — easily as good as or better than with the GeForce3, especially in 16-bit color. Most importantly, the card is rock-solid and ran every single game we threw at it without so much as a hiccup.

Hercules' 3D Prophet 4500 is a steal. It doesn't have a T&L engine like the GeForce2 MX, but it's still as fast or faster than its competition when running modern-day games.

BENCHMARKS

(All tests run on a P4 1.7GHz machine)

QUAKE III
All tests run in 32-bit color with effects set to max. The first number is with trilinear filtering enabled, the second is with bilinear filtering.
640x480: 148.2 fps, 155.2 fps
800x600: 124.1 fps, 138.5 fps
1024x768: 84.6 fps, 99.7 fps
1280x1024: 52.2 fps, 61.2 fps
1600x1200: 35.1 fps, 41.0 fps

MDK 2
All tests run in 32-bit color with effects set to max. The first number is with trilinear filtering enabled, the second is with bilinear filtering.
640x480: 122.5 fps, 122.5 fps
800x600: 115.7 fps, 120.4 fps
1024x768: 82.8 fps, 104.5 fps
1280x1024: 52.3 fps, 69.0 fps
1600x1200: 32.6 fps, 40.9 fps

3DMARK 2001
3DMerks: 2,433
Game 1 Car Chase
High Detail: 7.7 fps
Game 2 Dragothic
High Detail: 16.3 fps
Game 3 Lobby
High Detail: 22.6 fps
Game 4 Nature: Not supported by hardware
Fill Rate: 348.1 MegaTexels per second
Vertex Shader: 17.9 fps
Pixel Shader: Not supported by hardware

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS Great deal of performance for the price; beautiful image quality; features that make sense for today's games (e.g., AA, bump mapping, texture compression).

LOWS No T&L engine and lack of most DX8-enhanced features mean that its life is probably limited to a year or so.

BOTTOM LINE If we were building a system on a budget, we'd put the 4500 in it.

GRAVIS

Eliminator AfterShock

COMPANY
Gravis
www.gravis.com
800-235-6708

PRICE
$39.99 M.S.R.P.

Back in the day, nothing beat a Gravis gamepad. Heck, back in the day, the Gravis gamepad was the only choice. These days, however, we have tons of choices as PC gamers. Does Gravis still have the stuff? For the most part, we'd have to say yes.

The first point to note about the Eliminator AfterShock is how great it looks. Aesthetics aren't everything, but the looks serve a genuine purpose: the pad is as comfortable to hold as any controller in the history of controllerdom. Really.



It's got four primary buttons on the front and four trigger buttons up top — all placed just where we want 'em. In addition to a standard eight-way D-pad, the AfterShock also has two analog sticks for that extra level of control we've come to expect in modern pads. Next to each of these sticks is a button marked "Precision." When selected, each stick (or both of them) becomes extremely, well, precise. This feature is best used when trying to do something that requires a lot of dexterity, such as lining up a sniper scope on an enemy at long range. Precision can be enabled/disabled on the fly during any game.

As the name implies, the AfterShock is also a rumble pad, vibrating to various degrees depending on how the game has been programmed by its developers. This pre-set aspect is the pad's Achilles heal: The strength of force effects can't be adjusted (though they can be disabled altogether), and the effects themselves seem to come off haphazardly — if at all — in games where other feedback pads have no trouble. Even when playing the included full version of *Madden 2000*, most times the pad just seemed to rumble limply on random occasions that seemed to have no real correlation to what was occurring onscreen.

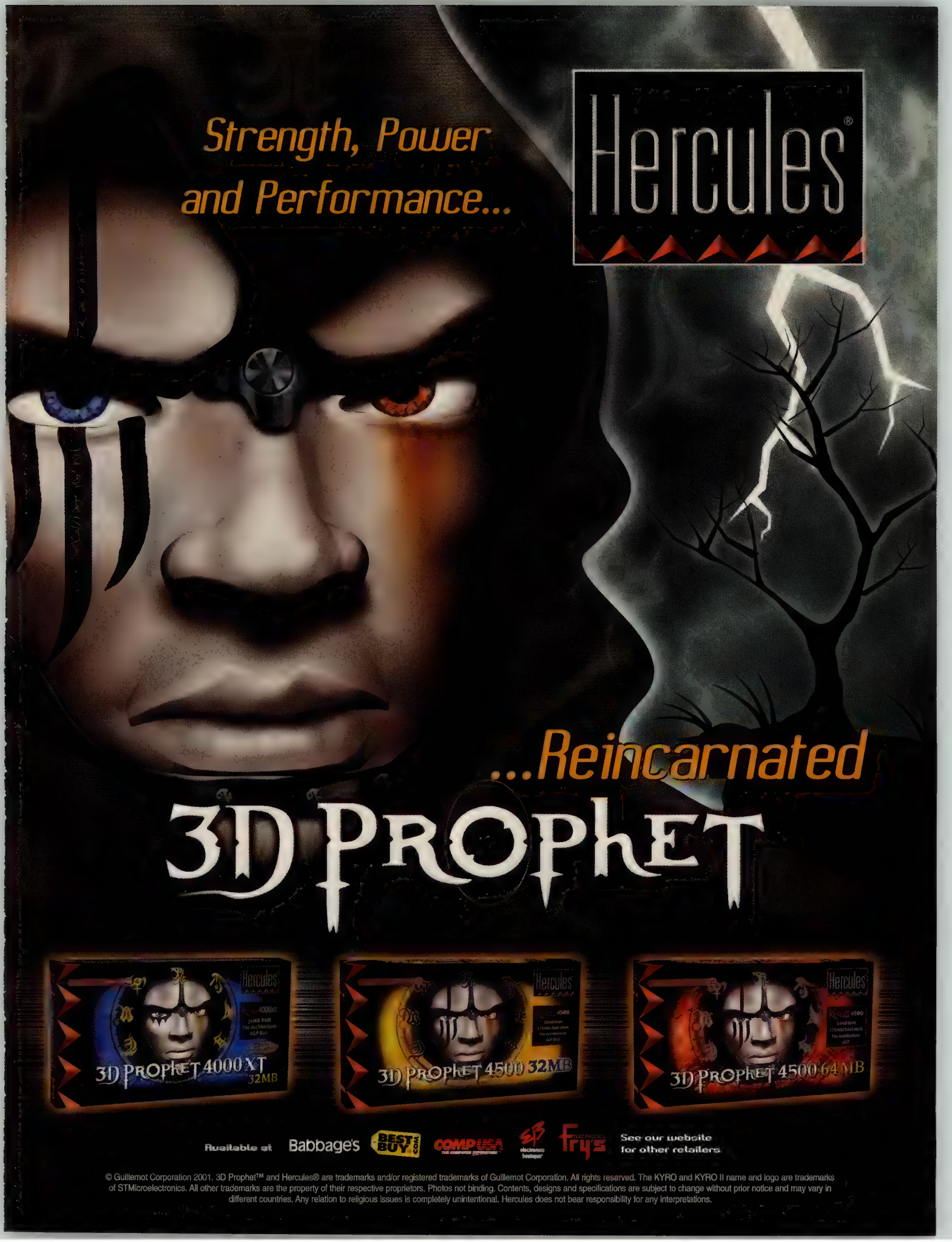
It's a sizeable flaw, but we still quite enjoyed playing games with the AfterShock. It's so comfortable, we're almost willing to forget about its flaws...almost.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS Extremely comfortable; precision control of analog sticks; simple-to-use programming software.

LOWS Weak, questionably supported force-feedback effects.

BOTTOM LINE It's impossible to recommend at full price, but if you find one on sale for $10 to $20 below list price, it makes a great standard gamepad.



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DAN MORRIS
extendedplay@pcgamer.com



EXTENDED PLAY

It's Good to Be the Khan

The new *Mongol Invasion* campaign extends the life of the dazzling feudal strategy game *Shogun: Total War*.

One of my favorite strategy games of 2000 was *Shogun*, an opulent re-creation of the samurai-era wars to unify feudal Japan. Now EA dips even further into the historical well to bring us the tale of 13th-century Mongol emperor Kublai Khan, who raised a giant invasion force and sent it to conquer Japan. Much to the Khan's dismay, a typhoon scuttled his fleet and sank his hopes.

Shogun Warlord Edition includes the original *Shogun* as well as the new *Mongol Invasion* expansion (also sold separately), which imagines what might have happened if nature hadn't decided the outcome of the invasion before it even began.

The Mongol hordes are definitely interesting to command. You land and form a beachhead with an initial invasion force, and are then dependent on periodic seaborne reinforcements. Since you can't raise any new armies (unlike the Japanese commander, who can conscript right and left), you have to be very careful about where and how you commit forces.

The Khan's units include an awesome Mongol Cavalry, as well as a Korean Spearman and a Korean Guard who pitch in their considerable talents toward the war effort (one of the benefits of having subjected every nation in your path).

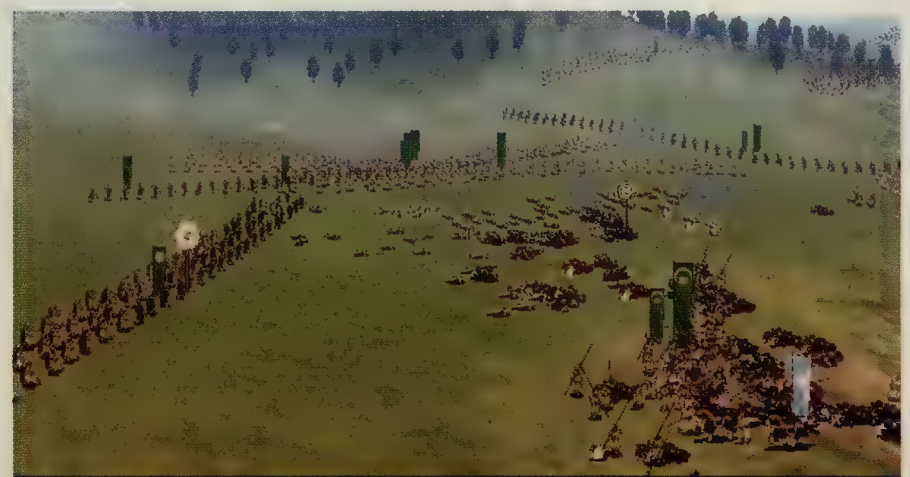
The Japanese have a few new aces up their kimono sleeves as well. Thunder Bomber units lob exploding projectiles in history's first use of incendiary artillery. The Battlefield Ninja is a stealth unit looking to assassinate enemy commanders. And the Ashigaru Crossbowman provides a deadly new ranged attack against armored units, particularly from higher ground.

Most of the graphics tweaks are purely cosmetic but welcome nonetheless: the marching armies now kick up majestic dust plumes in their wake; the settings now include battles along the coast; and mountains add cliff bluffs, crags, and peaks to the landscape.

In terms of actual gameplay, the designers have made a few basic tweaks. Enemy commanders are now pin-pointed on a lay-in map — a big benefit if you have throat-slitting Ninjas in the field looking to sow discord. Such a hit will really impact the battle since a new unit stat, Discipline, is affected by a unit's proximity to a qualified commander.

Tragically, multiplayer functionality is missing from the Mongol campaign — a big shame given that multiplay is where *Shogun* really blossoms.

Despite this omission, *Shogun* is becoming a classic strategy series of compelling gameplay. The *Warlord Edition* is a strategy fan's must-have, and for existing owners, *The Mongol Invasion* is definitely worth picking up. PCG



Smoke, dust clouds, and general mayhem are the usual order for the battlefield.

ADD-ONS AND ENDS

Flight Simulator 2000 and *Combat Flight Simulator* owners can now handily extend the life of their favorite Microsoft civilian or military flight simulation with just a couple of mouse-clicks and a credit card. Flight One Software (*www.flight1.com*) is offering a unique trio of add-ons for both products that should keep the jet set flying well into the winter.

747-400 PROFESSIONAL Can't wait for the release of *FS2002* to fly the big jumbo? This comprehensive Boeing 747 add-on from Phoenix Simulations allows you to slide behind the controls of the legendary jetliner in *FS2000*.



Featuring highly detailed pedestal and overhead instrument panels complete with multifunction displays and a fully operational Flight Management Computer, *747-400 Professional* will test the mettle of any virtual airline captain. It even includes a 60-minute VHS cockpit video to help explain what all of those damn switches are for.

KOREAN COMBAT PILOT This massive Korean War upgrade for both *CFS* and *CFS2* will let you trade in your F6F Hellcat for an F-86 Sabre as you attempt to kick the Communists back across the 38th Parallel. Featuring over a dozen flyable aircraft from both sides of the conflict, this new import from Blue Arrow will also let you take a Boeing B-29 Superfortress on bombing missions, or even execute a battlefield extraction in a M.A.S.H. helicopter!



HARRIER JUMP JET Designed to work with *CFS*, *CFS2*, and *FS2000*, this surprisingly deep add-on from Alpha Simulations ships with its own Falkland Islands combat theater and scenery. You can fly 17 variants of the Harrier, a Sea King helicopter, and a handful of Argentine fighters in a 20-mission campaign that features full carrier ops with VSTOL take-offs and landings. (Prince Andrew not included.)



— Andy Mahood

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killingbox@pcgamer.com



THE KILLING BOX

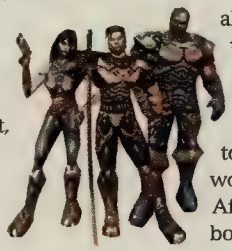
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We Need Another Hero

Where have all the cool characters gone? Colin laments the sad lack of shooting stars.

BJ Blascowicz may have never opened his mouth to let out a snippy one-liner, but any old-school gamer can identify him as *the* authority on Nazi-stomping. And what of the *Doom* guy? He has two responses to outside stimuli: pain ("Unnngh") and death ("Arrrrgh!").

Sexist pig Duke Nukem also won our hearts in a similar fashion, with his not-quite-3D facelift. Gamers were so amused to see a character who used the word "shit" and offered strippers cash to "shake it, baby" that they courteously neglected the fact that most of his lines were lifted verbatim from *Army of Darkness*. But all good artists steal, after all, and we'll be happy to forgive 3D Realms if *Duke Forever* ships sometime this millennium.



But where have all the heroes gone these days? Noteworthy character designs in the post-Duke period have dwindled to a scant few, thanks to urging from upper management to create highly marketable Virtual Thespians (i.e., rip off Duke and Lara so they can sell backpacks). The time has come for the first *PC Gamer* FPS Character Design Report Card. Brace yourself.

■ **COL. JOHN BLADE (SIN):** Trash-talking sexist cop with an attitude; Duke with dreadlocks at best. Any bonus points gained from goofy yet hilarious cut-scene dialogue have been lost with the gag-inducing anime-movie release. (See March 2001's Killing Box for the full hatchet-job on this shameful flick.) **B-**

■ **JC DENTON (DEUS EX):** Shades-sporting badass, equipped with nano-implants that allow him to become invisible so he can sneak into late-night screenings of *The Mummy Returns* without paying. Though the black trenchcoat is *so* blasé in today's post-*Matrix* landscape, the game's outstanding writing portrays a government-created killing machine who really just wants to be loved. **A**

■ **HIRO MIYAMOTO (DAIKATANA):** Named after Nintendo game designer Shigeru Miyamoto, whose sketchpad doodles alone hold more replayability and enjoyment than all of *Daikatana*. Master of English phrases that no human would ever use, such as "It is time to give Mishima his comeuppance." Hiro's partner, "I-Can't-Leave-Without-My-Buddy" Superfly, succumbs to the annoying and well-known Hollywood "Brother Rule," where the action star's African-American buddy is killed by the evil boss, prompting our hero to pursue bloody vengeance Did I just ruin the ending? Good: now you don't have an excuse to play it. **D+**

■ **ALEX MUNROE (ELITE FORCE):** Generic Security Team Fodder, gifted with as much personality as the six dozen poor red-shirt bastards wasted over the course of the various *Star Trek* series. **C-**

■ **CATE ARCHER (NO ONE LIVES FOREVER):** Sassy UK superspy in token spandex (shown below), and infinitely more classy than that Julie Strain character. Dialogue probably not written by Real British People, as it lacks key words like "snogging," "biscuit," and other gobbledygook that Rob Smith keeps slipping into my reviews. **B+**

■ **JOHN MULLINS (SOLDIER OF FORTUNE):** Based on scary real-life military guy. Advised Raven Software programmers on real-world reactions to getting hit in the groin with a rocket-propelled grenade. (Note: Mullins' partner Hawk also succumbs to the "Brother Rule.") **B+**, *if John Mullins promises not to hurt me*



Elite Force is great, but its hero is standard fare.

■ **SOLDIER OF GOD (CATECHUMEN):** "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5–6). Translated, that means that our Holy Warrior has no problem taking out punk-ass Roman soldiers and Sodomites who defy the Word of the Lord. The most well-rounded character in all the Christian-themed 3D shooters, of which there are currently two. **B**

■ **SERIOUS SAM:** Though it may give you the Frantic Action Feeling, the box art gives me the "mother of all ValuSoft cash-ins" feeling. The tanktop, sunglasses, and pair of guns make our Croatian-designed hero look like another prominent PC gaming personality. No, not KillCreek, you twit. **C-**

■ **CALEB (BLOOD/BLOOD II):** One part Duke, one part Undertaker from the WWF ("Ressstttt in pppiecesssss"). Though the protagonist is dead, he's still capable of letting loose some decent one-liners. **B-**

■ **LO WANG (SHADOW WARRIOR):** Oxymoronic Chinese ninja with name that dictates an unfunny penis joke every 12.5 seconds — e.g., "You want to wash Wang, or watch Wang wash wang?" Note to gamemaker: Asian-American gamers probably don't think his Hiroshima gags were all that funny. **F**

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MICHAEL WOLF
alternatelives@pcgamer.com



Time to Break the Rules

With the games market in a slump and publishers eyeing the bottom line, what must RPGs do to survive?



Baldur's Gate may not have been developed had the current market prevailed before its launch.

The games industry is suffering. Profits are hard to come by at the best of times, but like the rest of the economy, the games business is struggling along in the wake of earnings warnings and the dot-com crash. The roleplaying genre will have to retool itself if it wants to escape the grim fate of Internet start-ups.

It's not as if the games industry is going anywhere — people are still buying games, and developers are still making them. Companies like BioWare and Verant are pulling in big bucks with their best-selling titles; and while it's difficult for smaller developers to get off the ground in a market in which game publishers are loathe to spend any more money than they strictly have to, the market still has a strong consumer base.

But we're seeing a trend wherein companies put money behind only those titles that are sure to bring a return — licenses based on hit movies, and sequels to best-selling games. That trend has been around for a while, but with the current market, it's likely to get worse.

What's made the games industry successful is its constant ability to push the envelope of entertainment. With companies more intent on making a buck than walking the fine line between brilliance and idiocy, the number of *revolutionary* games is on the decline. Players experience the same gameplay mechanics now that they did two years ago.

Where are the *Tomb Raiders* (the first one, not one of the sequels)? Where are the *Baldur's Gates*? What happened to the games that broke the mold?

They're out there. Somewhere. But the current market means that game publishers — the folks with money — can't take chances with their products the way they once could. And that's going to make for a boring few years.

But it's the wrong course of action for gamemakers to be taking. Right now, when the publishing industry is at its lowest point, is when developers really need to break all the rules. Every time the industry's gone through one of its periodic down-cycles, it's taken a renewed wave of new hardware and game-design ideas to reinvigorate the scene.

Baldur's Gate is one of the most entertaining RPGs we've had the pleasure to play in the past several years. Before the release of the game, the RPG market was poor, to say the least — only a few RPGs came out every year, and they were seldom good, much less great. And the games simply didn't make money.

That's why this year's E3 held some promise, with the caveat of publishers needing to support this big-selling genre. *Neverwinter Nights*' complete attentiveness to the whims and gameplay desires of the mod-creating fan base could change the way games outside the RPG realm are developed. Black Isle's *Torn* is a bold step toward creating a franchise free from the constraints of the official Dungeons & Dragons license, and Bethesda's *Morrowind* will support an extensive plug-in editor, giving users amazing freedom to create their own roleplaying realms.

If the games industry were in the slump it is now back when BioWare was working on *Baldur's Gate* for Interplay, it's possible that the game would have never seen the light of day without some committed support. RPGs didn't make money. RPGs didn't sell like most mass-market games, such as *Tomb Raider*.

And Interplay *certainly* wouldn't have been able to afford to send an unknown game from an unknown developer into a market where only "Triple-A" games warrant marketing and advertising dollars. And if *Baldur's Gate* hadn't shipped, then it's likely that the RPG landscape would look very different today. Say, maybe, *non-existent*.

That's what we're up against, folks. Publishers, developers, and retailers are all suffering — but the person suffering the most is you, the gamer. E3 has managed to restore my hope for both this genre and the market at large, with great games preparing to push the RPG genre forward. We'll once again get a booming games business — if more games will break all the rules. PCG

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WILLIAM R. TROTTER
desktopgeneral@pcgamer.com



DESKTOP GENERAL

WARGAMES · HISTORIC AND MILITARY SIMULATIONS · TACTICAL COMBAT

MindSim's *Wargames 2000*

From an unexpected source comes a new CD-ROM program that earns its billing as "The Encarta of Wargames."

MindSim Corporation specializes in setting-up custom business management simulations for corporate clients. Though very successful in this field, its creations aren't likely to be of interest to most recreational gamers — after all, not even the hardest of the hardcore will get worked up over a spreadsheet-tabulation "game."

But its newest product, *Wargames 2000* (never mind that it didn't become available until well into 2001), certainly warrants the full attention of my readers. It is the most comprehensive source of data and resource material on the subject of wargaming ever published on one CD. The asking price, $29.95, seems paltry when you realize that you're acquiring, in one convenient format, a veritable reference library.

Wargames' database of games (more than 4,300 titles, in every format) is worth the price of admission by itself. It's complemented by a massive computer-games anthology.

Wargaming is serious business on this CD-ROM, and that tone is established by the introductory essay, provided by Lt. Col. Matt Caffrey (USAF, ret.). Caffrey's yearly Connections conferences at Maxwell AFB have long served as a splendid forum where commercial wargamers and enthusiasts can swap ideas with members of the professional military. Caffrey's "Introduction to Wargaming" provides the most lucid, trenchant analysis I've ever read as to why this curious genre is worth serious intellectual commitment. I wish we had space to reprint the entire piece.

Information on the CD is grouped into very logical categories, and navigation is a snap. The database of games (more than 4,300 titles, in every format) is worth the price of admission by itself. It's complemented by the massive computer-games anthology compiled by my esteemed colleague, M. Evan Brooks — here you can look up every war and strategy game ever published, by date, genre, or designers' names, and read a pithy critical evaluation based on the consensus of contemporary reviews.

There's a wealth of articles and books on the theory and practice of game design, by such luminaries as Chris Crawford, Jim Dunnigan, and Peter Perla (who also contributes a fascinating essay on "The Human Factor in Wargaming"). Ready-to-play rulesets are posted for tabletop gamers as well as PC warriors. Want to read Clausewitz or Sun Tzu? Their books are here, in both straight text and annotated versions.

The "Biblographies" [sic] of military History and Wargaming sources are exhaustive, though their presentation is plain vanilla — just a series of huge alphabetical lists with dates and publishers. But there are no notes indicating a given book's slant — usually, this is self-explanatory from the titles, but even a brief summary of content would make this section more valuable (it'd also be a superhuman task for any researcher, so I'm willing to cut some slack in this area).



Among the demos included with the disc is the ever-cool *TacOps*.

THE SUBJECT OF WAR

"If we love peace, why play at war? After all, the traditional spiritual urges us to 'study war no more,' on the apparent assumption that this will lead to peace. It sounds reasonable. Yet if we say, 'We love health, so why study disease?' we begin to see a paradox. Anti-AIDS protestors call for more money to study AIDS, yet few anti-war protestors call for more money to study war. Perhaps they should."

— LT. COLONEL MATT CAFFREY
PROF. OF WARGAMING AND CAMPAIGN PLANNING
THE AIR UNIVERSITY, MAXWELL AFB

When you explore the "WWWeb Resources" category, however, you really get your money's worth. Note to the many readers who have written me lately asking where they can find period-specific statistics and tactical info: This is the place! Diligent Internet surfers will sooner or later turn up what they're looking for, but this listing can save you hours by linking you directly to such topics as "The World War One Document Archives," "Statistics of U.S. Wars," "Maps of Roman Times," "Artillery of the Napoleonic Era," "Civil War Battle Records," "Turkey in World War One," and tons of other sites you probably never knew existed.

Also included are fully playable demos of *TacOps*, *The Operational Art of War*, and the whole of HPS' Aide de Camp 2 utility, which allows you to convert your favorite board games into computer programs.

You can also access complete registers of wargaming clubs and associations, commercial game publishers' sites, and relevant magazines. Hardcore wargamers will revel in the numerous scholarly studies of the genre — again, there is more here than you probably dreamed of, and much of it is of the highest quality.

Yes, certainly, I know of a lot of websites that didn't make it into this compilation, and so, probably, will you. But MindSim intends to periodically update all its databases and welcomes such information from customers.

All in all, *Wargames 2000* is an impressive achievement. I will certainly have many occasions to fire it up in the future and I recommend it heartily. If you're a serious wargamer, head over to *www.mindsim.com* and order it immediately. PCG

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So Many Sims, So Little Time

Armchair pilots, take heart: Mahood finds plenty of games still pinging on the flight-sim radar.

The next time someone tries to convince me that flight sims are dead, I'm gonna bitch-slap them with the blunt end of an AIM-9M Sidewinder until that broken phonograph of theirs stops spitting out hooey. The end of a genre...too expensive to develop...too complex to learn...

Twaddle.

As I write this, my desk is overflowing with current and pending flight-sim titles. I'm having a devil of a time just trying to find the spare hours to play. Some pretty weighty contenders have landed on retail shelves since last September's release of Microsoft's *Combat Flight Simulator 2*. *B-17 Flying Fortress II* and *Battle of Britain* have certainly kept a lot of WWII simmers aloft, while *X-Plane* has opened up a whole new world of virtual flight for the civvie crowd. Add to this the current and/or imminent releases of Maddox Games' awesome-looking *IL-2 Sturmovik*, TRI's *Fly! II*, and Microsoft's *Flight Sim 2002*, and the prop-plane and biz-jet fraternity should have enough stuff to keep them going well into 2002.

Okay, but what about the jet jockeys? After all, there hasn't really been a significant modern-era combat sim since Jane's *F/A-18* shipped almost 18 months ago, right? Well, true...to a point.

The chief buzz going on in the missile-chucking community centers around some sparkling new upgrades and enhancements for graybeards such as *Falcon 4.0*, *Flanker 2.0*, and *F/A-18 Korea*. Each of these classics is currently on the receiving end of a massive facelift, tummy tuck, and boob job.

The recent release of the eFalcon 1.09 "superpatch" for *Falcon 4.0* by a dedicated group of programmers and enthusiasts at eTeam (*http://eteam.frugalsworld.com/*) has effectively given the F-16 sim a whole new lease on life. (Ironically fitting, when you consider that the high-flying MicroProse title was about three or four years ahead of its time when first released in 1998, anyway.) Not only is the 2001 model easier on the eyes and much more challenging to fly, it's also about as bug-free as a product of this depth and complexity can possibly hope to be. It even comes with a 75-page PDF manual just to explain all the new avionics.

SSI's *Flanker 2.5* and Graphic Simulation's *F/A-18 Korea Gold* are a pair of similarly revitalized classics. While the latter is a modestly priced stand-alone product offering a raft of enhancements on its 1997 parent game, *Flanker 2.5* — an augmentation of *Flanker 2.0* — is a freely available 55MB download from SSI's website (*www.flanker2.com*). Both of these upgrades offer a slew of new features, ranging from USB controller support to enhanced 3D acceleration and, in the case of *Flanker 2.5*, an entirely new bird to fly (the MiG-29K).



Featuring a new "clickable" instrument panel, eFalcon 1.09 impressively reinvents *Falcon 4.0*.

See where I'm going here? That's no less than 10 titles that simmers can play, revisit, or salivate over (like the Pavlovian dogs we are) for the rest of the year.

And if you're a jet jock with no interest in second helpings of *Falcon*, *Flanker*, or *F/A-18 Korea*, then there's even more relief around the corner with the impending North American releases of DiD's *Eurofighter Typhoon* and SSI's *Lock-On*. (These are developed by the same teams responsible for *EF2000* and *Flanker 2.0*, respectively.) *Typhoon* should be on store shelves by the time you read this, while *Lock-On* is expected to ship before the year is out.

For those of you still counting, that's now 12 unique titles that I've touched on — and I haven't even mentioned the burgeoning third-party add-on market yet. Outfits like Wilco Publishing continue to pump out quality *Flight Simulator 2000* supplements such as *767: Pilot in Charge* and *Airport 2000 Volume 3*, while owners of *FS2000* and *CFS2* can turn to FlightOne Software (*www.flight1.com*) for an entire hangar of flight-sim enhancements, including *Korean Combat Pilot*, *Harrier Jump Jet*, and *747-400 Professional*. (Check out the sidebar in this month's Extended Play column for more info on each of these three titles.)

To paraphrase Mark Twain, all of those reports extolling the death of flight sims appear to have been greatly exaggerated. Based on my own little straw poll here, it would certainly seem that the genre is still in the air. I suspect it always will be, just so long as some of us continue to indulge in our age-old fantasy of flight (or conversely, to blow the crap out of stuff with some really cool weapon loadouts). PCG



Maddox Games' exhaustively detailed *IL-2 Sturmovik* WWII sim will transport gamers to the bitter cold of the Russian Front.

A New Era Has Begun...

Cossacks - European Wars is a historical real-time strategy game based on events during the XVI-XVIII centuries in Europe when nations and states were created and demolished, gold was turned into vast armies, and never ending wars shed oceans of blood.

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Cossacks
- European Wars



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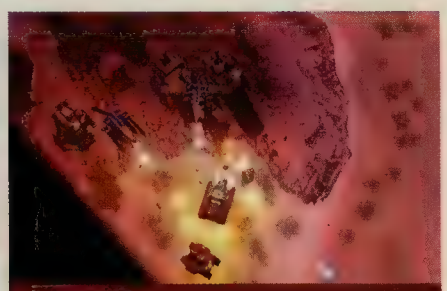
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Emperor: Battle for Dune

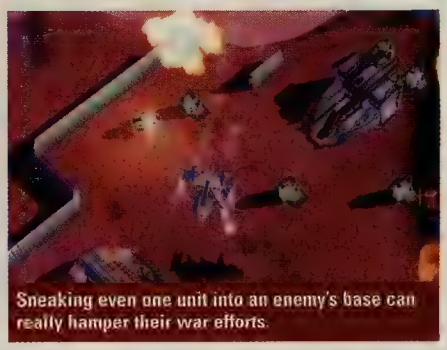
Having trouble with *Emperor*'s involved campaigns and strategic battlefield? Battle your way to supremacy with these hard-won strategies.



Before attacking, study the map info. It'll help you decide whether you have a chance of taking the territory.



Always create a wall of opposition at the entrances to your base.



Sneaking even one unit into an enemy's base can really hamper their war efforts.

LAUNCHING AN ATTACK

When planning to attack an opposing House's territory, take your time and carefully evaluate the pros and cons of each territory. You don't need to defeat both opposing Houses to finish the game, so pick one House and focus all your efforts against them.

Things to look for before attacking: the proximity of your nearest base (move it to the front if possible), the number of nearby controlled territories, and whether or not you have any allies in the area, like the Fremen, which you can call upon during your attack.

Once you're on the field of battle, immediately send scouts out across the map — they're camouflaged, so the enemy generally can't see them, and they're a great way of quickly revealing your surroundings. (Scouting is also a great tactic in multiplay.) Your primary objective when attacking is to seize control of the territory, but you'll often have side objectives that also need to be completed. Carry out those objectives first because they usually lead to alliances, which mean more troops at your disposal.

As you're sending out scouts, locate each entrance to your base and place a unit there so a wandering enemy unit doesn't surprise you. You can extend the radius of your power plants by building walls, so build a wall to the fringe of each of your base's entrances and construct defensive structures there. Always make sure that you have enough windtraps: if your base loses power just as the enemy attacks, all of your defensive structures will go down and you'll be screwed. Also be sure to scatter defensive structures throughout the interior of your base in case the enemy manages to break through your first line of defense. Bolster these structures with both close- and long-range fire support.

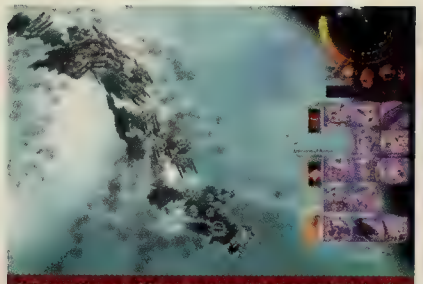
If the enemy base is heavily fortified, probe one of the far ends of the base and use your advanced carryalls to ferry heavy weaponry directly to that area. This technique is great for sneaking behind enemy lines, and since most of your enemy's defenses will be clustered around the entranceways to his base, you can often wreck havoc before the enemy has a chance to counter-attack. Once you're behind enemy lines, target the windtraps, which will cut the base's power and slow their production speed. Naturally, if you can hit structures like the factory or construction yard, you should do so.

DEFENDING A TERRITORY

When an enemy attacks one of your territories, immediately create a handful of units and retaliate. Remember, they will be starting a base from scratch, so if you hit them early enough, you can slow them down tremendously. Immediately follow that attack with a second wave, using every unit you have, and finish off the enemy. Often, when the enemy senses they're going to lose, they will retreat. Destroy those retreating units.

USE ALLIED UNITS

Each of the five sub-Houses will provide you with new units should you ally with



A large force of long-range units guarded by short-range infantry can be very effective.



Using advanced carryalls, we've managed to land a sizable force behind enemy lines.

them. Don't neglect these units, as they can provide you with some much-needed firepower. Some of the highlights include the Tleilaxu Leech, which infects an enemy unit and turns it into a leech; the Guild Niab Tank, which can teleport across the map (even into areas still covered by the fog of war), where its lasers wreak havoc on enemy structures; and the Ixian Projector, which creates exact replicas of your forces, thus making your army seem much larger than it actually is. When used in conjunction with your House's base units, these additional units can quickly turn the tide of battle.

BIND 'EM OR LOSE 'EM

This is standard practice in RTS games, but it warrants mentioning here: use hotkeys to group units together. Simply select a group of units and press Ctrl 1–9 to assign them to a specific number. Then, when you hit that number, you can move all assigned units with one mouse-click.

Of course, simply binding a bunch of random units together can be pointless, and bring about your own swift defeat. A better tactic is to group units together by type and then move all bound units across the map in unison, with the fast-moving units running interference for the slower-moving units. And always keep rapid-firing units close to your long-range units for close-fire support. It's far too easy to lose an entire squad of expensive units because of poor planning.

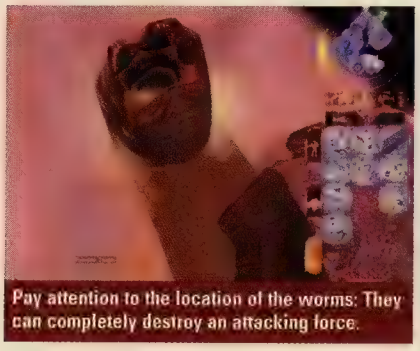
HOW TO USE SUPER-WEAPONS

The super-weapons aren't all that super, but when used properly, they can still open up a can on the enemy's forces. Here are some tips for the proper use of each of them:

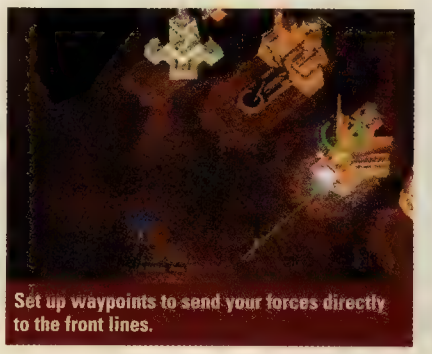
- **ATREIDES HAWK STRIKE:** The Hawk Strike is probably the most powerful super-weapon. Instead of actually harming enemy units, it projects a giant holographic image of a hawk on the field of battle, and all who see it immediately flee. However, for this weapon to be used effectively, it must be *in front* of enemy units; if it's behind them, nothing will happen. When preparing to launch a major assault, find the largest mass of defensive units, fire the Hawk Strike at them, and then swoop in. Remember, this weapon only affects units such as tanks and soldiers — it has no effect on defensive structures.

- **HARKONNEN DEATH STRIKE:** Though it doesn't have enough "oomph" to completely destroy most buildings, this missile will inflict pretty substantial damage. And using it in specific ways will *really* mess up your opponent.

 The first option is to strike the enemy's construction yard (always go after this building first) and then quickly follow up that attack with an air strike. If you time it correctly, the enemy won't have time to repair the building before your air units come swooping in for the crushing blow.

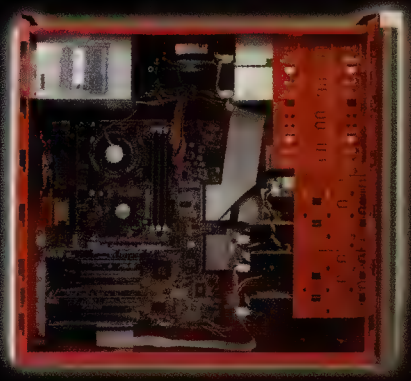


Pay attention to the location of the worms: They can completely destroy an attacking force.



Set up waypoints to send your forces directly to the front lines.

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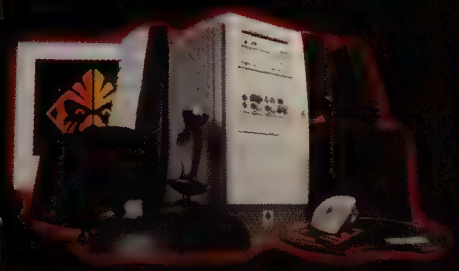
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Josh Norem
Maximum PC Magazine

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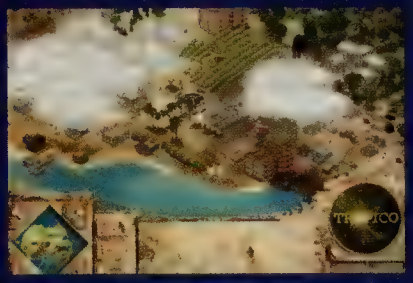
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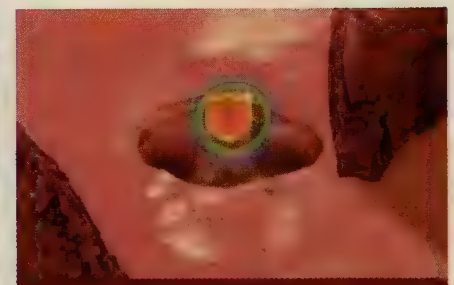
Having trouble running your dictatorship? Try these tips from the game's design team — and cheat if you have to!

- Remember that your people do two things that slow down their productivity: they eat and sleep. Moreover, they wander away from work to do both, and the farther they have to travel, the slower they'll return to the real task at hand. Laying out your city with an eye on travel times will improve your production greatly. Consider putting marketplaces in centralized locations or, if need be, close to large factories.
- Since travel is the productivity-killer, it's important to note the use of roads. Tropicans are generally lazy and will cut corners while walking. They also go faster downhill than uphill, for obvious reasons. When the terrain type is rough or the grade of the land steep, you'll find people will generally follow roads the most. So if the grade of the ground is such that a Tropican will not normally use it, build a road through it, and they'll travel over this new section despite its difficult slope. This tactic is of particular interest near the docks.
- Tropico is not the U.S.: More is not always better. Having two high schools has little effect, as does having two embassies. Always consider the buildings you create carefully: each one has some impact, so try to make it the most productive choice.
- Don't forget factory upgrades. It's easy to overlook a building upgrade, but the improvements they provide can be huge! Most upgrades are cheaper than new buildings and offer everything from improved worker happiness to entirely new product production.

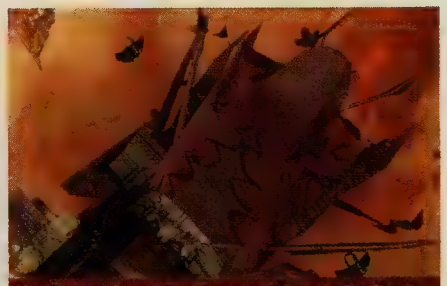
CHEATS: In the main game world, hold down Ctrl and type:

pesos Get $20,000.
contento Increases your people's happiness.
rapido Instant building construction. (Works only with 1.02 patch.)
muerte Causes selected unit to die. (Works only with 1.02 patch.)





It may not look too awe-inspiring, but riding a worm can be a great tactic.



You'll face the mighty Emperor Worm in the final mission. It must be destroyed at all costs.

The Death Strike also leaves behind a nasty residue that will damage or destroy all enemy units that come in contact with it. If you can't hit the construction yard, hit the largest cluster of enemy units you can find, which is often the enemy's harvesters, and the ones that aren't destroyed outright will soon follow their brothers into the next life.

- **ORDOS CHAOS LIGHTNING:** Because Chaos Lightning is the weakest of the super-weapons, it should be used mainly in conjunction with a major offensive. This massive ball of electricity causes all affected units to go berserk, where they'll attack friends and foes alike. If the enemy has forces massed along the fringe of their base, hit them with the Chaos Lightning and then use the chaos (hey, imagine that!) to penetrate their base.

THE WAR OF ATTRITION

In the game's final missions, when you invade a House's homeworld, you'll find yourself faced with overwhelming odds. One way to even them is to immediately find and destroy the enemy's harvesters. Use units that fire at both land and air and you'll eliminate their carryalls, too. Replacing all that hardware will cost your foe quite a bit, giving you time to build up a force large enough to wipe the opposing House off the map.

If the opportunity presents itself, target the enemy's construction yard immediately after destroying their harvesters. Unless they build a new MCV, they won't be able to replace any destroyed structures.

UPGRADING STRUCTURES

To build advanced units and structures, you'll need to upgrade each of the base structures individually. Your first impulse will probably be to upgrade all structures automatically, but this can be a very expensive endeavor. Instead, perform only necessary upgrades. For example, if you never use advanced infantry units, don't waste your money upgrading the barracks.

That said, you should immediately upgrade your construction yard so you can build advanced defensive structures.

RIDING THE WORM

One great strategy in both single- and multiplay is to take a Fremen Fedaykin and summon a worm, which the Fedaykin can then ride. The worm will stay under your control for only a short while, but during that time you can decimate enemy troops. The only caveat: It can take a while to summon a worm, so be patient and don't rely on this tactic in emergency situations.

THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

SPOILER ALERT! *Emperor*'s final mission reveals an insidious plot by the Guild to create an Emperor Worm, a dastardly creation that blends human and sand worm. If this creation is unleashed, it will spell doom for all Houses, so it must be stopped at any cost. On the surface, this mission appears to be impossibly hard: You must create a new base, fend off attacks, and battle your way through seemingly insurmountable odds in order to reach the worm. However, if you take your time and think things through, this mission is actually pretty simple.

First, while in the building phase, don't send out any units to explore, as this action will alert the enemy and trigger massive attacks against your base. Instead, keep your units home, build up a simple base (complete with decent defenses), and gear your efforts toward creating advanced carryalls. Moving units to the Emperor Worm via the ground is too difficult, but you can usually get three or four carryalls through enemy defenses.

Have the carryalls carry the most powerful units you can muster and drop them on the far side of the worm. Move these units close to the worm and order them to attack it while sending the carryalls back to your base in case you need to send reinforcements. While your units attack the Emperor Worm, the enemy will throw everything at you, so get ready for one hellacious battle. You don't need to fend off the enemy completely; just hold them off until the Emperor Worm is destroyed. Once that happens, the mission ends and you'll emerge victorious.


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The *Pool of Radiance* sequel should be hitting shelves this fall — complete with crabby pink slug thingies.

A MATTER OF STRATEGERY

Who owns SSI now?

— Grant Wei, via email

Ubi Soft owns SSI and its titles. Several games that are currently in the works — such as Silent Hunter II, Destroyer Command, *and* Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor *— are still likely to be released bearing the SSI brand name. It's possible, too, that the brand name will continue beyond these titles.*

ALL BLUE ABOUT BLACK & WHITE

Why should I play any more *Black & White*? *PCG* may have given this game a high score, but I still find creature training to be a real downer. The game should provide you with more info on what you can and cannot teach your creatures. At this point, I feel like if I'm going to get the most out of *B&W*, I'm going to have to buy a stupid strategy guide to learn what the manual omitted, and that's not right.

— James, via email

That's a good point: coming to terms with what B&W*'s creatures can and cannot do could have been expressed in greater detail. Still, many of us feel that the learning process is half the fun! If you're really stuck but want to give the game another try, read the single-player strategy we ran last month, or visit* www.planetbw.com *for more help.*

A HANKERIN' FOR THE HUNGER

My friends and I want to get the *They Hunger* trilogy! Is there a place we can download it from?

— Harvey Collazo, via email

You could have gotten the complete collection from the CD included with June's PC Gamer, *but if you missed that (for shame!), the entire trilogy is now available for download online at* www.fileplanet.com.

BEHIND THE TIMES

You should really set up some forums on your website. Maybe you could even show up every now and then, so you don't seem as distant from us readers.

— Name withheld, via email

We've had forums for a long time now! Go to www.pcgamer.com *(an all-new version of which should be up and running soon) and you'll see the link. In addition to our forum, we also have a chat room that we're always popping in to see if anyone is around. Come on by and say hello!*

WHERE'D ALL THE FUN GO?

What the hell is LucasArts doing? I grew up on their incredibly successful and enjoyable PC games, but after checking their website in recent times I've been disgusted at how few PC games they have in the works. As of May 10, LucasArts has announced six games for E3, and only one is a PC game. After trash like *Battle for Naboo, Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine*, and *Force Commander*, the best LucasArts can give us is a 2D junker called *Star Wars Galactic Battlegrounds* [formerly *Star Wars Battleground*]?

Now, I know they have at least one promising game on the horizon for the PC, *Star Wars Galaxies*, and when it comes out I'll be right there with my $50 in hand, but until then, what are they offering us? A *WarCraft* clone? Come on — give us another incredible game like *Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight*!

— Dale Penn, via email

The PC Gamer *editors have just returned from E3. And of all the companies whose games were at the show, LucasArts was the most dominant. Why? Because its lineup was absolutely amazing.*

By enlisting such quality developers as Verant, BioWare, Ensemble Studios, and Raven Software, LucasArts has smartly put its incredible properties in talented hands. Massively multiplayer online RPG Star Wars Galaxies *was one of the most impressive PC games on display.* Galactic Battlegrounds *continues to impress even beyond the initial promise that earned the game our June 2001 cover. BioWare's third-person RPG adventure is still early in development, but it's already high on our "must see" list.*

And to see that Raven Software has been given the keys to the Jedi Knight *legacy is music to our ears:* Jedi Knight II: Outcast, *powered by the* Quake III: Arena *engine, should be fantastic.*

It seems that no one is more aware of LucasArts' poor recent history with PC games than the company itself, so kudos to them for enlisting the right help. This move should ensure some great Star Wars *gaming for us all in the future.*

DIVIDED NATIONS

Today at lunch I got into an argument about who makes better games, the Japanese or the U.S. Being the patriot that I am, I said that American games are much better, using companies such as Blizzard and Black Isle Studios to make my point. Several of my more stubborn, console-loving friends, however, kept insisting that companies like Squaresoft and Capcom are better. Then we got in an argument over who created the first RPG. Those numbnuts said that the Japanese started it all with the Nintendo Entertainment System. I said bullpucky, but had no proof. Please help me prove my point.

— Jake Riddel, via email

Jake, your heart was steering you in the right direction. The original NES wasn't launched in Japan until 1983. By then, American-made games like Wizardry *and* Ultima *were already RPG staples on the Apple II here in the States. Heck,* Akalabeth, *Richard Garriott's first RPG, was released in 1979!*

As for which country makes better games, that's entirely a matter of opinion. Whatever fluffs your flankers — that's our *motto!* [It is? — Ed.]

SUPER TEPID TROOPER



What I want to know is, Why was that poor stormtrooper in the background of your June 2001 cover on fire? What could he possibly have done to deserve such a horrifying death?

— Ryan Bolli, via email

Amazingly, the stormtrooper in question walked away from the incident with only minor burns to his head, face, chest, neck, feet, arms, legs, back, stomach, and left pinky. Wouldn't you know it, that dork Larry (that's his name) got a little too close to the laser-blast charges used in our photo shoot. Unfortunately, no one told him that the paint on his new stormtrooper armor hadn't dried yet, and was therefore extremely flammable.

Special advertising section

Coming this September from the makers of PC GAMER

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Official Xbox Magazine

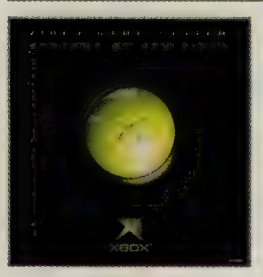


XBOX UNWRAPPED

Priced, dated, and heading to a TV set near you.

INSIDE: Brand-new details on DVD features and more!

UNVEILED



INSIDE THE BOX

Adventure, excitement, and exhilaration — all you have to do is unwrap it.

One of the most pivotal, magical moments in a gamer's life is the simple act of unpacking a new console. There's the smell of plastic, the strange new packing materials, the glossy manual, and of course, the console itself. The weight, the heft, the solid-yet-somehow-still-sleek bulk of a new videogame console. And let's face it, in the history of videogames, few new boxes have been quite as charismatic or intriguing – or imposing – as the Xbox's.

On November 8, 2001, you'll be able to do just that – slide your Xbox out of its enigmatic obsidian sheath (above left), set it out in front of your TV, and explain to Mom/ Wife/ Significant Other/ Cat that this will in fact be beneficial to the overall living-room vibe. After all, this is more than a mere game system – it's a complete home-entertainment hub. Xbox will change the way you relax forever.

The Xbox is, of course, more than just a box. For $299, you take home a system, a controller, and a 10 Gigabyte hard-drive with a broadband Internet connection built right in. No peripherals to buy, no confusion about upgrading in the future. It's all right there in the box. The Ethernet port lets you attach your existing broadband modem – be it cable, DSL, or even satellite – and play a host of impending networked greats, including sports titles from Sega, skateboarding with Tony Hawk, and hyper-realistic racing in *NASCAR Heat*.

By the Numbers

Available	November 8, 2001
Price	$299
Approximate number of games at launch	14-20
Number of units by the holiday season	1-1.5 million
Number of plumbers hawking the system	0
Controller ports	4
Reasons not to buy an Xbox	0

MEMORY CARD



Though the Xbox uses a hard drive for game saves and more, sometimes you'll need portable data, say for taking a custom *Tony Hawk* skater to a pal's house.

The Ethernet socket also lets you turn your gaming experience into a party: Invite a host of Xbox pals, attach your systems together, and up to 16 players can compete and cooperate on an instant, no-nonsense LAN (Local Area Network). The fact that the Xbox comes complete with four controller ports means that multiplayer games are also as easy as plugging in a pad.

And what a pad. Inside every Xbox package is a frighteningly delicious, fully-featured controller studded with six analog action buttons, two analog triggers, twin analog sticks, and, of course, an eight-way directional pad for when you have to kick it (ass) old-school. Add to that a power cord and an AV cable, and you have an unbeatable box.

Loud and Clear

Microsoft is pretty darned insistent that it's planning a revolution, not an evolution, and nowhere is that more clear than in the promise of the Xbox Communicator. The headphone and microphone combo plugs into your controller (through one of the two expansion slots, so no tangled wires!) and enables true, clear broadband voice communication with buddies or opponents – depending what type of language you plan to employ. Although the system is flexible enough for game designers to use in any way they like, you can expect the games that use it to utilize the black and white buttons on the Xbox pad – one for open cursing (err... taunting) and the other for secret team-to-team communications.



Out of the Box

If you want to do more than play the highest quality videogames around, you can pick up the DVD Movie Playback Kit and turn your Xbox into the absolute center of your home-entertainment experience. The Xbox is the only videogame system to support HDTV and Progressive Scan for both gaming and DVD applications. So for your $299 (and a little extra for the remote package) you get one of the most capable DVD players on Earth, and since your Xbox has four controller ports, you won't have to keep swapping between the remote and the game controller... unlike some other consoles we could mention.

So when you get tired of watching *The Matrix*, maybe it's time to be in *The Matrix*. Exclusive Xbox experiences, like Spielberg's *AI*, *The Lord of the Rings*, or the Bruce Lee game, will make every other console owner green with envy. You'll be green yourself as you bask in the comforting, hypnotic glow of the oh-so-green Xbox jewel.



Much cooler – not to mention easier – than controlling movies with a game pad.

Totally Wired

The Xbox guys know that this system is a serious piece of equipment, and with that in mind, they've made it much more flexible in terms of connections than any console preceding it. Unique cables, called AV Packs, let you attach your Xbox to any combination of home-entertainment center you can think of by allowing you to use your existing industry standard cables, such as S-Video, Composite AV, and even High Definition 1080i Component Video. The packs have built-in extension cables, adding physical flexibility to their already enviable technical agility. These AV Packs, as well as an RF adapter, System Link Cable, and a host of third-party accessories, will all be in stores when the system arrives on November 8.



AV Cable: comes with the Xbox.



Advanced AV Pack (S-Video).



HD AV Pack (Component Video).



RF Adapter for ancient TVs.

CONSOLE ENVY: The feelings of inadequacy, the pangs of jealousy, and even that not-so-fresh feeling are all perfectly normal emotions and can be easily cured by buying an Xbox.

XBOX™ Official Xbox Magazine

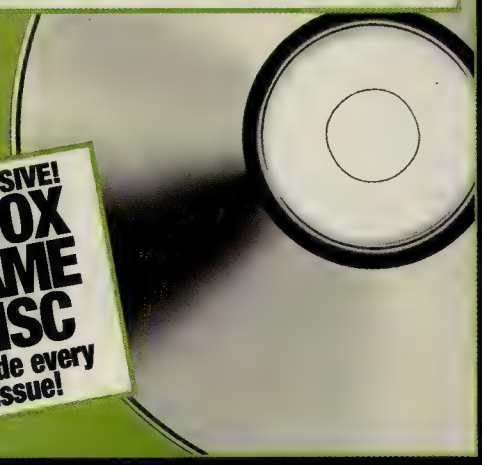
Amazing machine needs amazing magazine



So you've read about it, you've seen the screenshots, and you can't wait to get your hands on an Xbox. We can't blame you: it's a stunning piece of machinery. But if you want to really keep up to date on what's happening in the Xbox world, you'll have to check out the ultimate Xbox authority – the **Official Xbox Magazine** – a magazine solely dedicated to exposing the best news, reviews, interviews, and previews of jaw-dropping new Xbox software. We'll have the in-depth features, comprehensive reviews, and access that only the official magazine can bring you. Paired with the Xbox Game Disc, newsletter, and website, it's the ultimate Xbox source.

The Exclusive and Playable Xbox Game Disc

One of the things that makes the Official Xbox Magazine unique is the inclusion every month of the Xbox Game Disc packed with game movies, demos, and downloads. Making full use of the incredible Xbox hard-drive and online technology, the Disc will also interact with you, the reader, featuring downloadable cheats, game challenges, and essential secrets. The Xbox Game Disc will become the ultimate gaming resource for Xbox players.



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The Official Xbox Magazine Newsletter

There's only one way to keep up to date with what's going on in the world of Xbox and the Official Xbox Magazine, and that's to sign up for our free email newsletter. Packed full of hot gossip, exclusive previews, cool info, and razor-sharp screens from the latest and greatest Xbox games, it's the essential tool for any Xbox fan – and it's delivered free to your email inbox. Too good to be true, you think? Find out for yourself by signing up at: www.officialxboxmagazine.com.

CONSIDER THE DEAD HORSE BEATEN: On 27 separate occasions, the word *Xbox* (d'oh, 28) appears on this page. Yes, we'd like a thesaurus for Christmas.

Check the Rating!

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rating system can help you decide whether a computer or video game is right for your family. The ESRB system provides both CONTENT DESCRIPTORS that indicate whether there are particular content elements which may be of interest or concern, and RATING Symbols that tell you what age the game is appropriate for.

RATING SYMBOLS

(found on the front of the game box):



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ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

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- Comic mischief
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- Realistic violence
- Animated blood and gore
- Realistic blood and gore
- Animated blood
- Realistic blood
- Suggestive themes
- Mature sexual themes
- Strong sexual content
- Use of tobacco or alcohol
- Use of drugs
- Gaming
- Edutainment
- Informational content
- Some assistance may be needed

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BACKSPACE

The *PC Gamer* editorial staff has just returned from the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) as thrilled as it's possible to be at the bounteous collection of PC gaming goodness on display. As a trade event, E3 is closed to the general public — the gamers at large. So, you're curious, right?

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

E3



■ **It lasts for three days, Thursday through Saturday, and is currently held at the Los Angeles Convention Center.**

■ The E3 show is owned by the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA), an organization that attends to the public needs of the companies that publish all our lovely games.

■ **Many people attend E3 just to go to the lavish parties thrown by the likes of Microsoft and Sony.**

■ Microsoft had Third Eye Blind and Blink 182 perform at its party this year.

■ **Third Eye Blind almost ran over a few *PC Gamer* editors as the band's SUV raced out of the parking lot.**

■ Sony dropped somewhere in the region of $2.5 million on its party for 6,000 attendees, who enjoyed 15 bars and a performance by Everclear.

■ **Alcohol consumption increases tenfold (for most people) during E3.**

■ Hangover cures are not available in the show's press room, but really should be.

■ **Boxed lunches *are* available in the press room, but really shouldn't be.**

■ Conferences and workshops on a variety of topics pertaining to game design, publishing, development, and the industry at large are held every day.

■ **No one goes to these sessions because everyone is on the show floor, looking at the cool new games.**

■ Over 100 amazing PC games were on display at E3 this year, many of which are covered in our feature.

■ **Not many cool new Xbox games appeared at E3. In fact, precisely *no* cool *new* Xbox games were on general display. *Halo*...yikes.**

■ Peter Molyneux's new game for Xbox, *Project Ego* — still over 18 months from release — was bloody awesome, however.

■ **Nintendo spoiled Microsoft's Xbox appearance by announcing GameCube's launch and displaying some original (though definitely kiddie-focused) games.**

■ If you sleep for more than five hours a night at E3, then you didn't really "do" E3.

■ **Exhibitors believe that they'll attract the most interest in their booths by blasting techno music at insane decibel levels.**

■ Exhibitors are wrong.

■ **Exhibitors are *right* when they think attractive women — "booth babes" — wearing skin-tight outfits will attract attention.**

■ Unfortunately, we're all growing up, and scantily clad ladies are not the showstoppers they once were.

■ **Gathering of Developers' "Promised Lot" outside the convention center is a scene of raucous decadence for three days. And great fun. Mmmm...boxing nuns!**

■ If you want a big presence in one of the two main halls, be prepared to drop between $2 million and $6 million on floor space alone.

■ **Paying to get into E3 costs about $200. Nobody *pays* to get in.**

■ It's very easy to get in to this trade-only event if you claim to be a "freelance" journalist or an "independent" store owner.

■ **It's these people who seem to have time to sit in line for two hours to see a trailer of the *Final Fantasy* movie.**

■ Finally, E3 is a phenomenal display of the games industry's growth. We bitch and moan about preparing for the onslaught, but it's the lifeblood of the industry and we love it, especially when the PC game lineup is so awe-inspiring.

■ ***PC Gamer* will be back in L.A. for a repeat performance next year.** PCG

So we've just left Microsoft's E3 party, and we're waiting in line for a cab to take us to a bar. It's a slow line, and the security chief is doing his best to keep it orderly. But the party had been loud, the alcohol flowing, and Third Eye Blind's played a great set, so the line is spilling off the sidewalk and across the driveway of the parking lot. ¶ A huge white SUV comes barreling through the parking lot, its driver apparently not realizing or caring that the taxi line is right in his path. We all hear the SUV before we see it. Scattering like bugs, we somehow make it out of the way of the onrushing vehicle. The taxi line dissolves into a mad rush for survival. ¶ The SUV stops in the driveway for just a second before racing onward. As the line slowly reforms, the security chief announces: "By the way, folks, that was the entertainment. Think about that the next time you're in a store and considering buying a Third Eye Blind album."

NEXT MONTH

World Exclusive: *Sims Online* — Will Wright's new baby revealed

Sims creator Will Wright is not one to keep creating sequels of his original game designs. New exciting projects are always around the corner, and that's the case with *Sims Online*. Wright's personal involvement is testimony to the incredible potential of bringing the *Sims* phenomenon to the online community. Don't miss it.

Huge previews, in-depth reviews, and all the news

With all the incredible games coming up, we get up close and personal with some of the biggest and best.

PC GAMER

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Dell™ Dimension™ 8100 Desktops Feature the Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor

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- 128MB RDRAM
- 60GB[5] Ultra ATA/100 Hard Drive (7200 RPM)
- 19" (18.0" vis, .26dp) M991 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA® GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics Card with TV Out
- 8X/4X/32X CD-RW Drive
- Turtle Beach® Santa Cruz™ DSP Sound Card
- Harman Kardon® HK-695 Surround Sound Speakers with Subwoofer
- 56K Capable[6] PCI Telephony Modem
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]
- 6 Months of DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10] Included

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Cutting-Edge Technology

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.4GHz
- 128MB RDRAM
- 40GB[5] Ultra ATA/100 Hard Drive (7200 RPM)
- 17" (16.0" vis, .28dp) E770 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA® GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics Card with TV Out
- 48X Max CD-ROM Drive
- SoundBlaster 64V PCI LC Sound Card
- Altec Lansing® ACS-340™ Speakers with Subwoofer
- 56K Capable[6] PCI Telephony Modem
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]
- 6 Months of DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10] Included

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- 48X Max CD-ROM Drive
- SoundBlaster 64V PCI LC Sound Card
- harman/kardon® Speakers
- 56K Capable[6] PCI DataFax Modem
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2]
- 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]
- 6 Months of DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10] Included

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No payments for 90 days.[12] E-VALUE Code: 89385-500707

DELL™ NOTEBOOKS:

DELL™ INSPIRON™ 4000

Thin and Light

- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 700MHz
- 14.1" XGA TFT Display
- 64MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 6GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular 24X Max CD-ROM Drive
- 8MB ATI® Rage Mobility™ 128 3D® 2X AGP Video
- Internal 56K Capable[6] FaxModem
- 26.5WHr Li-Ion Battery w/ExpressCharge™ Technology
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months of DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10] Included

$1279 or as low as **$38** per mo. 45 mos.[12]

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DELL™ INSPIRON™ 4000

Thin and Light

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 900MHz Featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 14.1" XGA TFT Display
- 128MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular 8X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 8MB ATI® Rage Mobility™ 128 3D® 2X AGP Video
- Internal 56K Capable[6] FaxModem
- 26.5WHr Li-Ion Battery w/ExpressCharge™ Technology
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months of DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10] Included

$1949 or as low as **$58** per mo. 45 mos.[12]

No payments for 90 days.[12] E-VALUE Code: 89385-800719a

DELL™ INSPIRON™ 8000

Multimedia Mobile Desktop

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 700MHz
- 14.1" Super XGA+ TFT Display
- 64MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Fixed 24X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 16MB ATI® Rage Mobility™-M4 3D® 4X AGP Video
- Internal 56K Capable[6] FaxModem
- 59WHr Li-Ion Battery
- harman/kardon® Audio
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months of DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10] Included

$1599 or as low as **$48** per mo. 45 mos.[12]

No payments for 90 days.[12] E-VALUE Code: 89385-800715b

DELL™ INSPIRON™ 8000

Multimedia Mobile Desktop

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1GHz
- 15" Super XGA+ TFT Display
- 128MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Fixed 24X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 2nd Bay 8X CD-RW Drive
- 32MB DDR NVIDIA® GeForce2 Go™ 4X AGP Video
- Internal 56K Capable[6] FaxModem
- 59WHr Li-Ion Battery w/ExpressCharge™ Technology
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months of DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10] Included

$2449 or as low as **$73** per mo. 45 mos.[12]

No payments for 90 days.[12] E-VALUE Code: 89385-800724a

DELL™ SOLUTIONS:

SOFTWARE & ACCESSORIES

Printers:
- Epson® Stylus 777 Color Printer, add $89
- HP® DeskJet® 952C, add $149 after $50 HP® Mail-in Rebate[38] (Reg. $199)

Scanner:
- HP® ScanJet® 4300Cse, add $89 after $50 HP® Mail-in Rebate[38] (Reg. $139)

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- APC® Pro8T2 SurgeArrest, add $39

Software:
- Extreme Game Pack (Dimension™ only), add $79
- Family Game Pack, add $79

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How about some peace of mind to accompany your new Dell™ system?

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Inspiron™ Notebook Service Upgrades:
- Upgrade Inspiron™ Notebooks with 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[2] and 1-Yr Mail-in Service to:
 - 3-Yr Ltd Warranty[2] and 3-Yr Mail-in Service, add $99
 - 3-Yr Ltd Warranty[2] and 3-Yr Next-Business-Day On-Site Service[4], add $219



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1.7GHz. my friends are envious. my enemies are scared.





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- 17" (16.0" vis, .28dp) E770 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA® GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics Card with TV Out
- 8X/4X/32X CD-RW Drive
- SB Live! 1024 Digital Sound Card
- Altec Lansing® ACS-340™ Speakers with Subwoofer
- 56K Capable[6] PCI Telephony Modem
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]
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The Dell™ Dimension™ 8100 with a 1.7GHz processor. Feel the power.

Simply stated, the Intel® Pentium® 4 processor delivers mind-boggling processing speed when you need it the most. Want to know more? (There are always a few who do.) The 8100 features dual-channel RDRAM with memory up to 2GB, a 400MHz system bus and a built-in ATA/100 hard drive interface. Yes, it's a bit lonely having a PC like this. But you'll get used to it.

intel inside pentium 4

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